

# WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

# SUPPORTING HOMELESS WOMEN

OVER A DECADE OF  
ACHIEVEMENTS

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

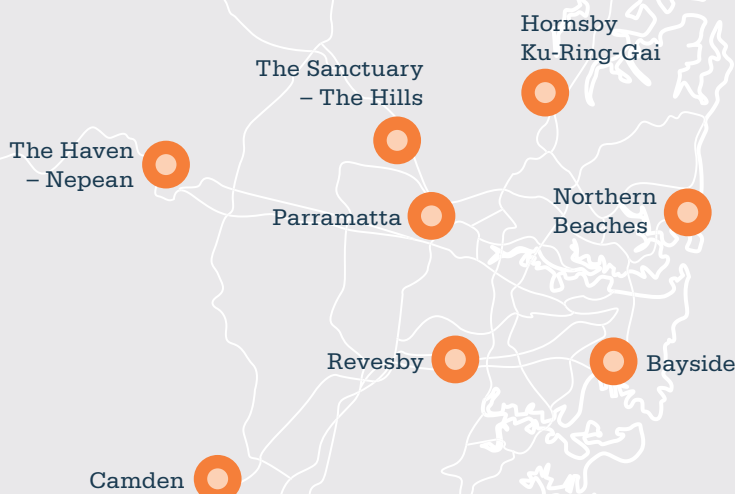
Women's Community Shelters (WCS) acknowledges the traditional custodians of the many lands on which we live and work across New South Wales.

Our Shelter Network is located on several First Nation lands including Gadigal; Dharug; Dharawal; Worimi; Bidjigal; Gayemegal; Darkinyung; Guringai; Cammeraygal and Wallumedegal.

We pay our respect to Elders both past and present, and to those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, experts and organisations who walk alongside us as we work to protect women and children.

We acknowledge that homelessness and domestic and family violence are both experienced disproportionately by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We acknowledge the strength, resilience and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and celebrate their ongoing custodianship of this beautiful country which always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.





**From top, left to right:** Smoking ceremony at Biyani House – Revesby Women's Shelter; WCS Adventure All Stars.

**Second row:** Staff at the WCS Hub; Donations to Biyani House – Revesby Women's Shelter.

**Third row:** Celebrating Diwali; Taking part in the March for Women.

**Bottom right:** WCS CEO Annabelle Daniel receiving her OAM.





# FOREWORD



**THIS YEAR** Women's Community Shelters (WCS) is celebrating over a decade of achievements. WCS is a unique charitable organisation that empowers local communities to support homeless and at-risk women and their children through the provision of crisis shelters, transitional accommodation and educational and outreach services. It's been an amazing journey.

The origins of WCS go back even further to the establishment of the Manly Women's Shelter in 2010, now called the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter. My late wife, Ellie Hunt, came home one evening and announced that the Northern Beaches of Sydney needed a Women's Shelter, and "we" were going to start one.

When Ellie retired from nursing, she had become a volunteer at the Manly Community Centre. In that role she found out about the lack of crisis shelter accommodation for homeless and at risk women in the Northern Beaches of Sydney and the desperate need for such a service. She also found out that the Manly Community Centre had identified this need for a crisis shelter for over 20 years but had never had the resources to make it happen.

**“ My late wife, Ellie Hunt, came home one evening and announced that the Northern Beaches of Sydney needed a Women's Shelter, and “we” were going to start one. ”**

Starting and running a crisis shelter is complicated. To start with, you need the use of a suitable property that fits in with the local council's planning requirements, support from neighbours, considerable annual funding to cover operational costs and an amazing General Manager and Case Workers to run the shelter. But you also need a detailed understanding of government regulations and IT systems, how to properly case manage traumatised women, how to hire and manage employees and how to support the transition of women from crisis accommodation back into independent living. It's all too complicated and financially demanding for most communities to take on.

We were able to start the Manly Women's Shelter because we had determined leadership from Ellie, support from the local community and funding support from the Hunt Family Foundation. This funding support involved the Foundation underwriting two-thirds of the shelter's operating costs for the first three years to give the Board and management team the time and confidence to build up the shelter's own funding capabilities. And did they deliver! In the first year the underwriting was called in full, in the second year by about half and in the third year it wasn't called at all.

What I learnt from the Manly Women's Shelter experience is how dreadful domestic violence is in our communities and the damage it does to both the women suffering from domestic violence and their children; the amazing people in the community who want to help; and the complexity

and demands of running a shelter. Those lessons led to the "mapping out" of how we could establish more shelters around New South Wales, and in time, in other parts of Australia.

The unique strategy that we adopted was to take a franchise approach in partnership with local communities where communities wanting to start and run a shelter could be empowered to do so by a new charitable organisation – Women's Community Shelters. The charity would provide all of the necessary know how, systems and mentoring support and would underwrite an agreed level of financial support to the local community-run shelter, subject to that shelter committing to and maintaining high standards of practice.

Over ten years later we have eight (soon to be nine) crisis shelters in our network with the capacity to provide more than 56,000 bed nights per annum to homeless and at-risk women and their children.

Outcomes have been incredible and in 2021, WCS supported 746 women and children in crisis. We have also broadened our base to include transitional accommodation for women and children who need time to transition from crisis accommodation to independent living, providing 23,443 transitional housing bed nights in 2021, an increase of 6,520 on the previous year.

We have moved into early prevention with "Walk the Talk" where we go into local schools and teach gender respect in an inclusive way and the



damage done by domestic and family violence; and a new social business called Walk the Talk Corporate which goes into businesses to explain the horrors and damage done by domestic and family violence and how each of us can play our part to stop this terrible cancer in our local communities.

Along the way we have been supported by some amazing people. There are too many for me to list in full, but I wanted to particularly highlight the following people:

- **Ellie Hunt** who was the visionary behind the establishment of the Manly Women's Shelter which taught me so much about the power of local communities to solve social problems if they are just given the right support.
- **The Founding Chair of Women's Community Shelters, Gina Anderson**, who joined me at the start of this journey and our recently retired Chair, **Kris Neill**, who became our second Chair five years ago – both Gina and Kris have led the Board and supported the management team with passion, tenacity and determination.
- **Julie White** who joined the WCS Board in the very early days and has provided both wisdom and determination, and has recently agreed to be our Chair going forward.
- **All of the directors** that we have had along the way\*; who have provided the organisation with such incredible wisdom and support.
- **Our amazing Chief Executive Annabelle Daniel OAM**, who took the role when the charity simply had a concept and who made that concept a reality. Along the way Annabelle has built up an incredible team which includes our Chief Operating Officer, **Simone Parsons** and all of the other amazing people listed in this Annual Report.

\* See Board Members on page 34.

- **Mike Baird**, who, as Premier of New South Wales, had the vision and understanding to provide Government support for building the Shelter Network and all of the **Ministers and public servants** involved who have maintained that support ever since.
- **The Board and management teams** in all of our shelters who combine incredible professionalism with care and understanding of the trauma that women and children suffer from homelessness and domestic violence.
- **All of our donors and the donors to each of our shelters** who have believed in our vision and converted compassion to positive action. We are indebted to every one of them.

In the next decade we have the opportunity to massively increase the scale of our outreach through the establishment of more shelters, more transitional accommodation and more preventative education. But to do that we need governments and donors to come with us on this journey and to be ambitious.

Domestic and family violence and the trauma associated with being homeless do terrible damage to the women and children involved, but we can and must solve this problem. We just need determination, pragmatism, creativity, a sense of urgency and a clear vision. At WCS we are determined to rise to this challenge and make positive change happen.

I invite you all to join us on this journey with compassion, determination, a sense of urgency and the belief that we can together make a massive difference.

**Peter Hunt AM**  
**Founder and Board Member, WCS**



At left: NBWS Founder Ellie Hunt.

Above, from top: Meeting former Governor-General of Australia, Quentin Bryce AD CVO.

NBWS Board with Australian domestic violence campaigner Rosie Batty AO and former Premier of NSW, Mike Baird.

Meeting His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC and Mrs Hurley at Government House.

# WCS CHAIR REPORT



**Kris Neill, Chair**

**THIS YEAR MARKS** my 10th year on the Board of WCS and my fifth as Chair. It has been a joy and privilege to have been part of such a successful organisation, right from the beginning. Who would have thought that a tiny start-up would emerge within a decade as a sector leader. An organisation operating eight emergency shelters and a range of other vital homelessness services.

It is fitting that WCS Founder, Peter Hunt AM, has written this year's foreword. Peter and his late wife Ellie put such careful plans in place to establish WCS. With clear, straight-shooting objectives, they established a Board which included Julie White, who last year re-joined our Board and continues to make an impressive contribution.

I am thrilled that Julie has agreed to succeed me as Chair of WCS. Julie is a highly experienced and committed Chair and Board member and will do WCS proud, as she always has done.

While our combined "corporate memory" and experience – Peter's, Julie's and mine – have provided solid ballast for the growth of WCS, we have been assiduous in expanding our Board to meet the needs of an evolving organisation. We have welcomed to our cause a number of people of considerable skill and expertise. Each and every one of our Board members is active and committed. They work in many ways, additional to Board and committee

meetings, to support our team in the Hub and through them, the Shelter Network.

I encourage you all to read about our Board members as you work your way through this report. All bring to WCS diverse views and skills which collectively work to produce great outcomes for the organisation. As Chair, I am grateful to every one of them.

I would like to take this opportunity to advise that I will be stepping down as Chair of WCS. After 10 years as a Board member and Chair for five, I believe it is good governance practice to renew at the Board level. We have grown from a feisty start-up to a mature and prominent organisation in the homelessness sector. Renewal will ensure that trajectory of growth continues for the next decade. We are fortunate to draw from a strong pool of talent.

I would especially like to thank our founding CEO, Annabelle Daniel OAM; longstanding COO, Simone Parsons, our Business Manager, Lieske Dowd and our talented Hub team for doing what they do day-in and day-out with sunny smiles, agile solutions and the true commitment each carries in her heart. Every day, they and the Shelter Network they serve, demonstrate the values of WCS: Respect; Kindness; Excellence; Courage and Hope. These fabulous people are courageous every day.

**“ Every day, they (the Hub team) and the Shelter Network they serve, demonstrate the values of WCS: Respect; Kindness; Excellence; Courage and Hope. These fabulous people are courageous every day. ”**





During the past three years, our shelters and our Hub have demonstrated a tremendous duty of care to our clients and their children in keeping them safe from not only violence and abuse, but also COVID-19. At the outset, this was a time of great fear and uncertainty for everyone, and I am proud to report that our shelters and transitional housing locations handled myriad situations seamlessly. One shelter, Great Lakes, even ensured the safe birth of its youngest ever resident – at the shelter!

This extraordinary event at Great Lakes brings us from our discussion of good governance and renewal to why it is so important. That is to support the vital frontline work we do.

Over the past decade we have:

- Opened eight (soon to be nine) shelters across Sydney and at Forster-Tuncurry. As we go to print, we remain the only organisation in NSW which has opened new services for women and children escaping DFV in the past eight years;
- We have expanded into transitional housing streams, one for older single women (Australia's largest homelessness cohort) and another for women and children transitioning out of our emergency shelters to secure a new life;
- We have sought to be preventative too, through our school program, Walk the Talk. Despite COVID-19, Walk the Talk continues to grow and now operates in 20 public and private high schools in NSW. As we have 'walked the talk' in our core activities, we have become a strong and respected voice for advocacy, speaking widely to community, media and to government, a trusted advisor to all.

But we could not do this without our supporters. As we have grown, so too has this wonderful group, the lifeblood of our organisation. We thank our loyal supporters and donors – corporate, philanthropic and local – who provide consistent and generous financial, pro bono and in-kind support. We would not be where we are today without each of you.

We are also grateful to the Federal, NSW and a number of local governments for their continued funding. Our local Shelter Networks deserve acknowledgement and applause for the direct support of their own neighbourhood shelters, providing tireless service whenever it is required.

I will leave WCS with such a mix of emotions. Some sadness, of course, but with contentment, pride and sheer happiness at what we have achieved together. I have unshakeable confidence in the organisation's ability to grow and succeed into the future. I have unshakeable confidence that we will continue to advocate with authority and compassion not just here in NSW but nationally.

I know WCS very well, in all its component parts, and the network will do all this because of the singular motivation we all share: protecting vulnerable women and children by giving them refuge, real hope and the chance of a new and safe life.

**Kris Neill**  
**WCS Chair of the Board**



**At left:** WCS Board Zoom meeting.

**Right, from top:** Preparing to film the monthly WCS newsletter;

Pru Goward visiting The Sanctuary – Hills Women's Shelter;

Kris Neill presenting at a Westpac fundraiser;

Receiving support from the Sebastian Foundation.

# WCS CEO REPORT



**Annabelle Daniel OAM, CEO**

**IT WOULD BE** impossible to begin to talk about 2021 without noting three things – firstly and significantly, the 10th anniversary of WCS' incorporation, highlighting a level of maturity in the organisation. Secondly, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our Shelters and services, and thirdly, the work of our Shelter Boards, staff and community networks on the frontline, and my gratitude for their ongoing and exceptional efforts to keep women and children safe under adverse conditions.

A decade is worth celebrating – and we now can in 2022, albeit somewhat delayed! In NSW, we faced changing restrictions for around six of the 12 months of 2021, necessitating rolling revisions of our policies and procedures around safety, COVID-19 and vaccinations. The WCS Hub team and Shelter Network raised the bar again and again in responding to these changes, often whilst

navigating the challenging conditions of 'work from home', supervising home schooling, changed working hours and the additional workload of the COVID-19 emergency responses.

Thank you to everyone involved in the work of WCS for your incredible commitment. It has had significant impact for the women and children we support and has been critical at a time when the pressures of lockdown intensified the impacts on those experiencing domestic violence in their relationships.

COVID-19 added around 40% of additional workload for our Shelters and Hub during 2021. Nevertheless, we are so pleased that WCS was able to advance our strategic agenda against a challenging backdrop. Our Biyani House – Revesby Women's Shelter, the eighth shelter in the WCS network, opened in January 2022, and Blue Wren House – Camden Women's Shelter began on-site construction and appointed a Shelter Manager.

The expected opening of Blue Wren House in 2022 will bring the number of operating shelters in our network to nine. Great Lakes Women's Shelter (Shelter 3) broke ground on their new purpose build in Forster, and Hornsby Kuring-Gai Women's Shelter (Shelter 2) purchased a permanent home and relocated their operations successfully.

We advanced our Transitional Housing projects with a raft of new partnerships, including our Abbie House partnership with CityWest Housing, Scape Accommodation and City of Sydney supporting women without children at risk of homelessness. Access to 'Meanwhile

Use' properties has been critical during the pandemic, and providing women and their families with medium term stability in housing is crucial in consolidating outcomes achieved in shelter, as well as providing a pipeline of affordable housing and services to a group who may never have interacted with the social services sector before – women over 55.

WCS initiated our WCS Advocates program, which recognises the key advocacy of many alumni and supporters of the WCS network, including former Hub staff, Shelter Board members, philanthropic supporters and learning partners. We carried on with Walk the Talk – our schools education program – to the degree that we could, under very trying circumstances!

We also did a lot of very important, but not so visible, consolidation behind the scenes with our systems, including our shelter management platform, OpCentral, and our supporter management. It's critical for us to say 'thank you' to our donors in a timely way! We've also had the opportunity to enhance our advocacy through written submissions and appearances at a number of NSW Government enquiries.

My enormous thanks to the WCS Board and Hub team for their incredible efforts this year. WCS has always been, and will continue to be, a team effort. They have resourced and supported our Shelter Network time and time again. My absolutely key partners in all, our Chair, Kris Neill and Chief Operating Officer, Simone Parsons, who are staunch



**Right:** WCS Ambassador, Sarrah Le Marquand and our WCS Advocates



women with the very best interests of WCS and those we serve at heart – thank you, beyond words. Kris’ departure in 2022 will leave big shoes to fill!

My deep thanks to our Ministers, MPs and departmental colleagues for continuing to support WCS and for being wonderful partners in the work of reducing domestic and family violence across our state. Our collegiate working relationship has continued to strengthen and deepen, and we look forward to working in alignment and partnership to build a stronger sector together over the coming years.

To our donors, corporate partners and friends – thank you for supporting us and for recognising the critical need for our work. We couldn’t do what we do without you. WCS is reliant on generous contributions from businesses, philanthropic trusts and individuals to keep us going. Thank you for supporting our core work, our innovation and our ongoing expansion. We remain ambitious to do more for those experiencing homelessness and domestic violence in 2022 and beyond.

**Annabelle Daniel OAM**  
Chief Executive Officer



Photo: © AAP Image.

**“ Women’s Community Shelters has changed the conversation on domestic violence and women’s homelessness in NSW, and that’s taken all of us influencing within our respective orbits for the long game.**

**The quality of our Board, staff and network has built a new professionalism in this space which is now well respected by Ministers and MPs, the NSW Public Service, the sector and communities. What a great position to be in to be considering our next steps! ”**

– Annabelle Daniel OAM



**Clockwise from top:**  
Treasurer Matt Kean MP, Annabelle Daniel OAM and Premier of New South Wales Dominic Perrottet; PWS sausage sizzle fundraiser; WCS Hub Staff.



**Simone Parsons, COO**

**I'M DELIGHTED TO** reflect on the extraordinary programs we delivered in 2021, in the year of the 'new normal' which was a case study in adaptability and resilience. If resilience is keeping ourselves steady as the world around us changes in unpredictable ways, then 2021 was undeniably a test of resilience.

It was also a case study in adaptability, as the Shelters in the Network changed the way they delivered services in response to Government health advice and COVID-19 guidelines, but equally, in response to the changing circumstance in which women found themselves, and the support they asked for, and housing needed.

The number of women we accommodated in our Shelters reduced slightly in 2021, because of physical distancing and public health requirements. Against this challenge, the strength of our programs and the way in which we work outside of the shelter environment truly came to the fore.

## **Transitional Housing and Outreach Programs**

In 2021, compared to the previous year, nights of accommodation provided through our Transitional Housing programs increased by 38%, clients supported through outreach increased by 22% and the number of women supported through our housing programs after leaving shelter increased by 16%.

What these statistics tell us is that in 2021, women in Transitional Housing needed longer periods of accommodation. Our pathways from crisis into housing with ongoing support are consistent and reliable, with increased opportunity for support. Our Shelters met the demand for delivery of this support 'wherever women were', either prior to being supported in crisis accommodation, or after leaving shelter.

### **Key achievements include:**

- Developing partnerships with our pathways home partners to deliver alternatives to 'communal' accommodation, a strategy to manage risk of COVID-19 in shelter.
- We worked with our housing partner Link Wentworth to implement COVID-safe strategies and kept older women in Mosman House and Beecroft House safe.
- We looked for opportunities to grow our Meanwhile Use through vacancies in student housing.
- Our Outreach Programs got stronger and shelters adapted to women's needs, most notably with GLWS building early outreach into their service delivery, keeping women safe when shelter beds were full.

## **Child Support**

Both 2020 and 2021 were years in which the way children attended school was radically different. In 2021, thanks to philanthropic funding support, we increased the hours that case work staff were employed to deliver our child support programs.

As shelter families isolated together and children home schooled 'in shelter', staff facilitated positive learning environments and access to education supports.

Provision of laptops and tablets was critical to enabling children to fully engage in remote education, and we thank the Foundations that supported this need.

## **Strong Systems**

Within the Hub, we focused on resourcing the network, building our Op Central operating platform and ensuring all Shelter Staff and Board members had access to breaking news, updated guidelines, business continuity plans, COVID-safe plans, policies, procedures and sector webinars.

We continued our work on accreditation and uptake of our outcomes measurement and case work through our 'Outcomes Star' system. Through use of Outcomes Star, women and children can identify and drive their personal change and we can identify both individual challenges but also the systemic barriers inhibiting change.



**Right:** Children playing at PWS.

**Page at right, clockwise from top right:** Dannielle Miller and KPMG; WCS Hub Monday meeting; Op Central dashboard.



“Communicating this awareness piece around homelessness and family violence to students inherently becomes bigger than a single presentation at a single school. Essentially, we are teaching the children’s networks, their parents. We are creating conversations that occur over the dinner table. This is where real change happens.”

– The Haven – Nepean Women's Shelter Manager, Samantha Campbell

We completed our work with the Reconciliation Working Group to finalise our draft Reconciliation Action Plan and submitted our plan for approval to Reconciliation Australia.

We focused on keeping the network connected through regular forums including Chair, Treasurer, Administration, Fundraising, Child Support Worker forums and Shelter Manager Network meetings.

My sincere thanks to every member of the Hub team, every Shelter Staff member, Shelter Manager, Shelter Board member, our partners and the WCS Hub Board. More than ever, this year demonstrated the value of being a Network, we were more and did more because we weren't going it alone.

### Walk the Talk Schools

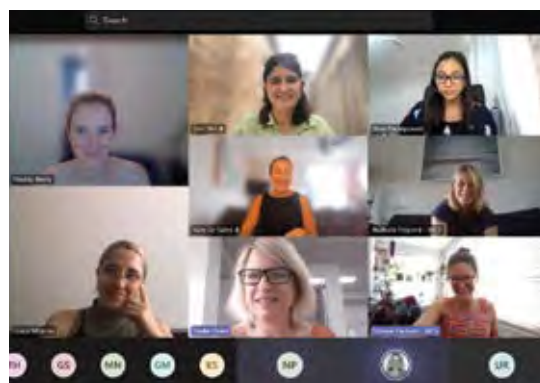
2021 was our third year of this ground-breaking education program. Walk the Talk teaches teens about domestic violence and the drivers of gender inequity and relationship abuse (such as sexism and gender stereotypes) and inspires them to action their learning by committing to provide service to their local shelter.

We had 3,300 students trained from 20 secondary schools all ready to embark on various fundraising and volunteer initiatives when last COVID-19 and school closures put a damper on the walking of the talk. Given the very trying circumstances in schools, we are very proud that schools did try to maintain enthusiasm for this program and foster connection to their local shelter. Testament to this is the fact that 18 of these schools committed to joining us again in 2022.

### Walk the Talk Corporate

In 2021 we were delighted to launch our new corporate training program which was created by our Director of Education and Special Projects, Dannielle Miller, with support from KPMG. This literacy program centres on survivors' voices and has a clear call to action. In 2021, Walk the Talk corporate programs were delivered to over 100 partners and directors at KPMG nationally with outstanding engagement. This body of work will now be marketed to other corporates and will become a source of income for WCS, as well as providing invaluable corporate connections to our cause.

**Simone Parsons**  
Chief Operations Officer





# WCS: OVER A DECADE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

**In 2011, Women's Community Shelters was established** in order to take the original Manly Women's Shelter model, developed by Founders Ellie and Peter Hunt, to other local communities, to provide emergency crisis accommodation and wrap-around support to women and children escaping domestic and family violence and homelessness.

**Just over 10 years later, WCS is celebrating more than a decade of incredible achievements** including successfully supporting eight communities to open crisis shelters across NSW and working towards opening shelter number nine in Camden.

**WCS now has a portfolio of transitional properties** providing additional accommodation to women exiting our shelters, with additional ongoing support.

**WCS also continues to be the only organisation in NSW to open new crisis shelters since 2014.**



Rosie Batty AO and Annabelle Daniel OAM.



2015

**February 2015:**  
Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter (HKWS).



2010

**November 2010:**  
Manly Women's Shelter opens, offering crisis accommodation to single women in the local area.

2011

**2011:** WCS Incorporated.

2013

**Annabelle Daniel OAM, employed as CEO,** to develop and grow the WCS model and expand the WCS network.

2016

**January 2016:**  
Great Lakes Women's Shelter (GLWS).

**April 2016:**  
The Sanctuary – The Hills Women's Shelter.



His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC and Mrs Hurley visit The Haven – Nepean Women's Shelter.

**WCS continues to be the only organisation in NSW to open new crisis shelters since 2014.**

Walk the Talk students.





Pru Goward, The Payce Foundation and Annabelle Daniel, OAM.



Signing the lease for Biyani House – Revesby Women's Shelter with members from Revesby Workers' Club.

2018

**April 2018:** The Haven – Nepean Women's Shelter.

**December 2018:** Bayside Women's Shelter (BWS).

**WCS hosts the first Vice Regal visit** as His Excellency General The Hon. David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) shows his support to WCS and visits The Haven – Nepean Women's Shelter.

2020

**WCS launches Pathways Home**, its innovative 'Meanwhile Use' venture that provides Transitional Housing to women and their children and older single women escaping domestic and family violence, by identifying underutilised properties and repurposing them for transitional housing.

**WCS opens Mosman House**, the second transitional property for older women.

**CEO, Annabelle Daniel** receives an Order of Australia medal.

2022

**January 2022: Biyani House – Revesby Women's Shelter opens.**

**Abbie House, WCS' first inner city transitional partnership project opens**, providing affordable self-contained accommodation for single women.

**Transitional and Meanwhile Use program** now part of our core program delivery for the network.

**WCS Hub has grown** from two staff in 2014 to a team of 16 skilled individuals supporting the Shelter Network with Governance, Finance, Quality practice standards, Staff training, fundraising and operational systems.

**Cooinda House, the third WCS transitional property** dedicated to older women opens in East Gosford.

**Shelter in development:** Blue Wren House – Camden Women's Shelter.

2018

2020

2022

2019

**December 2019:** Parramatta Women's Shelter (PWS).

**Beecroft House**, the first of WCS' large transitional properties dedicated to providing safe and secure housing to older women opens.

**WCS launches Walk the Talk** early intervention and prevention education program which has run successfully for three years with over 3,300 students taking part across 20 secondary schools.

**Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC**, 39th Governor of New South Wales and Mr Dennis Wilson visit Parramatta Women's Shelter.



2021

**Walk the Talk Corporate program launches**, a domestic and family violence literacy program which centres on survivors with a clear call to action.

**Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter purchases** and relocates to a new property.

**WCS continues work towards implementing our Reconciliation Action Plan** based on the recommendations of Reconciliation Australia.

**Great Lakes Women's Shelter successfully fundraises and purchases land** to build a purpose fit new shelter and relocates from existing location.

**WCS CEO, Annabelle Daniel OAM, becomes Chair** of peak body DVNSW.



Lieske Dowd and Annabelle Danielle OAM at a community forum.



# VISION & VALUES

**Women's Community Shelters (WCS) is a DGR1 charity, registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. We work with local communities to establish new crisis accommodation shelters for women and children who are homeless or leaving domestic and family violence.**

WCS operates a 'hub and spokes' model, where the WCS Hub (Head Office) works with communities to establish each shelter, provides funding and intellectual property support, expertise in governance, project management and adds each shelter to a growing network.

Once operational, WCS continues to provide best practice shelter management support to help shelters achieve positive outcomes for women and their children, whilst remaining cost efficient.

We currently have eight shelters across NSW, a growing portfolio of transitional properties and are working with the community in Camden to open shelter number nine in 2022.

Our shelter funding model is based on tri-partite funding. Each shelter is governed under a Funding and Support Agreement with WCS, and is funded through a mix of community fundraising, philanthropy/business contribution, and government funding.

WCS is unique as a social franchise model of shelter establishment in Australia.

## Our Purpose

Our vision to build an Australia where women and children are safe, secure, supported and equal.

Our core purpose is to establish crisis shelters and transitional housing pathways for women and children at risk of homelessness and domestic and family violence, in partnership with local communities.

## Our work incorporates the following key areas:

- Domestic and family violence
- Homelessness
- Meanwhile Use and Transitional Housing
- Community education and wellbeing programs.

WCS works with local communities to support women of all ages, at all stages of their journey. Our programs include outreach-based case work, child support, employment, education and training pathways and delivery of wellbeing programs to the women and children in our shelters.

WCS has expanded our core work to include significant 'Transitional Housing' projects, which provide the all-important next step of affordable housing for women and children leaving our shelters.

We also offer our 'Walk the Talk' respectful relationships education to high schools and corporates. Walk the Talk is an important early intervention and prevention work around domestic and family violence.

Through our education program, corporate volunteering opportunities, media engagement and community advocacy, we seek to influence personal, community and social change.

## We Believe

The key to solving the pressing social issue of women's homelessness and domestic and family violence is building the local community capacity to respond to women's homelessness and domestic violence.

We believe specialist women's shelters offering best practice support are a critical service for women and children.

## Future Plans

In November 2021, the NSW Government announced it will make its single largest investment in tackling domestic and family violence in the State's history, spending almost \$500 million on around 75 extra shelters for women and children leaving domestic and family violence.

More than \$464 million will be spent over four years on a model focused on self-contained accommodation to support women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

Following the historic announcement, WCS has been hard at work developing a domestic and family violence investment strategy that focuses on the consolidation and growth of our current model to ensure we secure:

1. Investment in our existing network
2. Explore options for expanding our existing model
3. Research new partnerships
4. Extend our network into new areas of designated need
5. Pursue additional accommodation for older women
6. Continue to encourage community mobilisation, participation and response.





# OUR VALUES

## RESPECT:

We value our staff, our volunteers and our community and recognise their contribution and worth.

## KINDNESS:

We are generous and considerate, non-judgemental and understanding of others' needs.

## EXCELLENCE:

We strive always to exceed expectations and deliver high standards.

## COURAGE:

We seek to drive positive change and challenge the status quo.

## HOPE:

We provide hope and an optimistic outlook to all our clients and communities through collaboration and partnership.



## Our Funding

### WCS Hub (Head Office)

\$1.6 million per annum, underwritten solely by philanthropy.

### Each Shelter in our Network

On average a minimum of \$470,000\* per annum to run, through a tri-partite funding model involving philanthropy/ business, local community fundraising, in-kind support and the NSW Government funding.

### Funding Model

The WCS Hub is almost completely funded by corporate and philanthropic partnerships, barring small amounts of government funding which go directly to the Shelter Network. The shelter funding model is a tri-partite arrangement involving contributions from Government, Community and WCS donors and philanthropists.

The model supports community fundraising to pay for a shelter's ongoing operating costs through a step-up approach. WCS underwrites up to two thirds of each shelter's funding for the first two years, and gradually increases community funding obligations to approximately 50% of yearly operating costs per shelter, per annum in following years.

This approach allows the local community the responsibility of fundraising for each shelter and therefore take ownership of its ongoing sustainability and success.

\*Certain shelters have larger costs due to additional programs and rent costs.



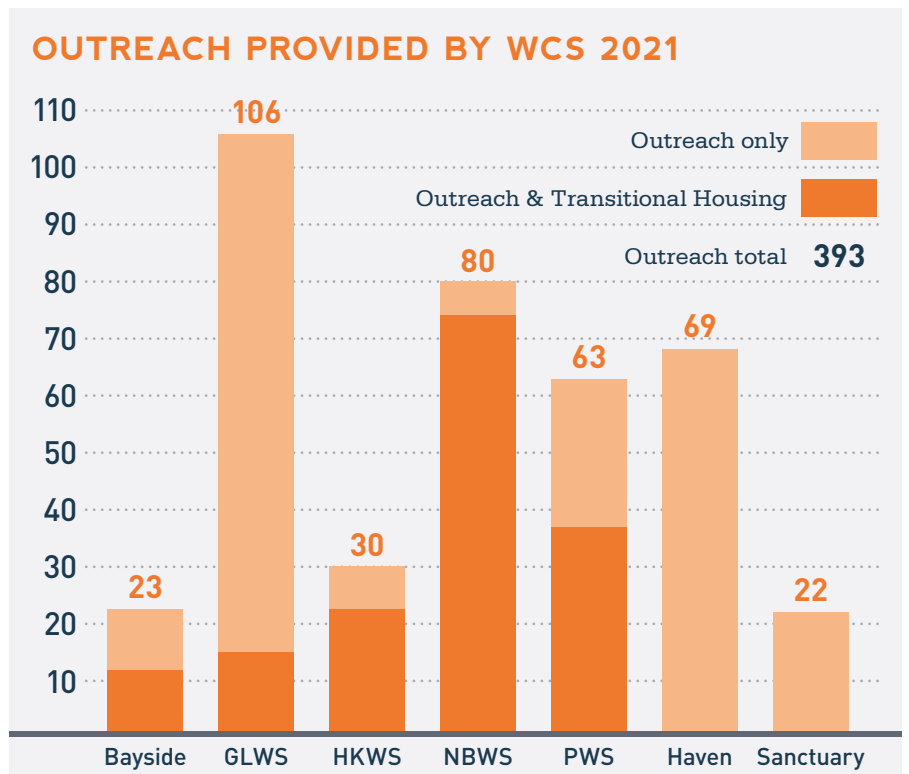
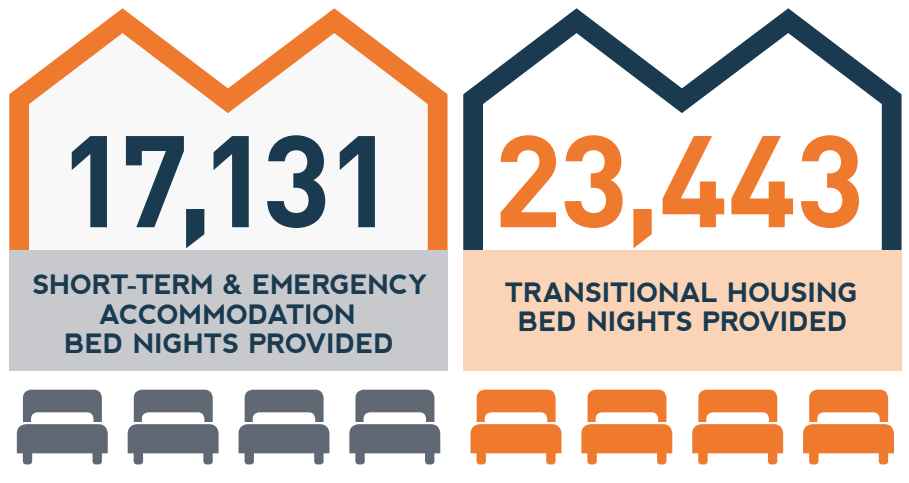
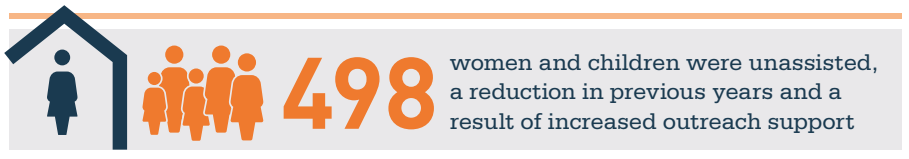
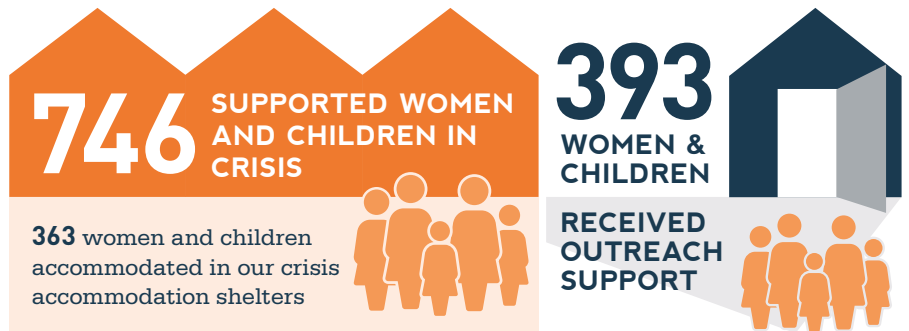
Far left: Volunteers at PWS.

This page, from top: WCS staff attending the DVNSW Conference; WCS Case Note Training.

# 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW:

## WCS NETWORK STATISTICS 2021

- In 2021, Women's Community Shelters supported **746** women and children in crisis with a support period.
- We accommodated **363** women and children in our crisis accommodation shelters.
- We provided outreach support to **393** women and children.
- We accommodated **141** women and children in Transitional Housing.
- There were **958** support periods opened for our clients, **585** women and **373** children.
- There were **498** women and children who were unassisted.
- We provided **17,131** short-term and emergency accommodation bed nights and **23,443** Transitional Housing bed nights.
- We provided **67,560** support period days.
- **94%** of shelter clients had completed some of their case management goals at exit.
- **31.2%** of our clients exited into long-term housing, and **20.39%** of clients exited into medium-term housing.
- Compared to 2020, there was a **22.26%** increase in the number of clients we were able to support in an outreach capacity.
- Compared to 2020, there was a **16.5%** increase in the number of clients we provided with Transitional Housing and a **38.4%** increase in the number of Transitional Housing bed nights we provided.
- Compared to 2020, there was a **16.7%** decrease in the number of women we accommodated in shelter.



# WCS SHELTER SNAPSHOT:

– JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2021

THE PAST TWO years have been incredibly challenging for the WCS Shelter Network, as both staff and clients have navigated the complexities of living and working in a COVID-19 world.

The effects of living through a pandemic can be seen in the shelter occupancy trends shown here, which show the impacts on service delivery, shelter occupancy and increases in outreach and Transitional Housing support during the 2021 calendar year.

We are grateful to our entire network who, despite the challenges, remained open in order to support the women and children in our care.

## Northern Beaches Women's Shelter

31  
CLIENTS

1,789 BED NIGHTS

- 31 clients accommodated
- 1,789 bed nights provided

## The Sanctuary – The Hill's Women's Shelter

92  
CLIENTS

3,040 BED NIGHTS

- 92 clients accommodated (41 adults, 51 children) – the most of any shelter!
- 3,040 bed nights provided

## The Haven – Nepean Women's Shelter

65  
CLIENTS

3,117 BED NIGHTS

- 65 clients accommodated (30 adults, 35 children)
- 3,117 bed nights provided

## Parramatta Women's Shelter

44  
CLIENTS

3,269 BED NIGHTS

- 44 clients accommodated (10 adults, 34 children)
- 3,269 bed nights provided

## Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter

36  
CLIENTS

813 BED NIGHTS

- 36 clients accommodated
- 813 bed nights\* provided

\*NOTE: HKWS crisis accommodation was reduced due to a relocation of the shelter.

## Great Lakes Women's Shelter

64  
CLIENTS

3,003 BED NIGHTS

- 64 clients accommodated (27 women, 37 children)
- 3,003 bed nights provided

## Bayside Women's Shelter

31  
CLIENTS

2,100 BED NIGHTS

- 31 clients accommodated (15 adults, 16 children)
- 2,100 bed nights provided



# 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

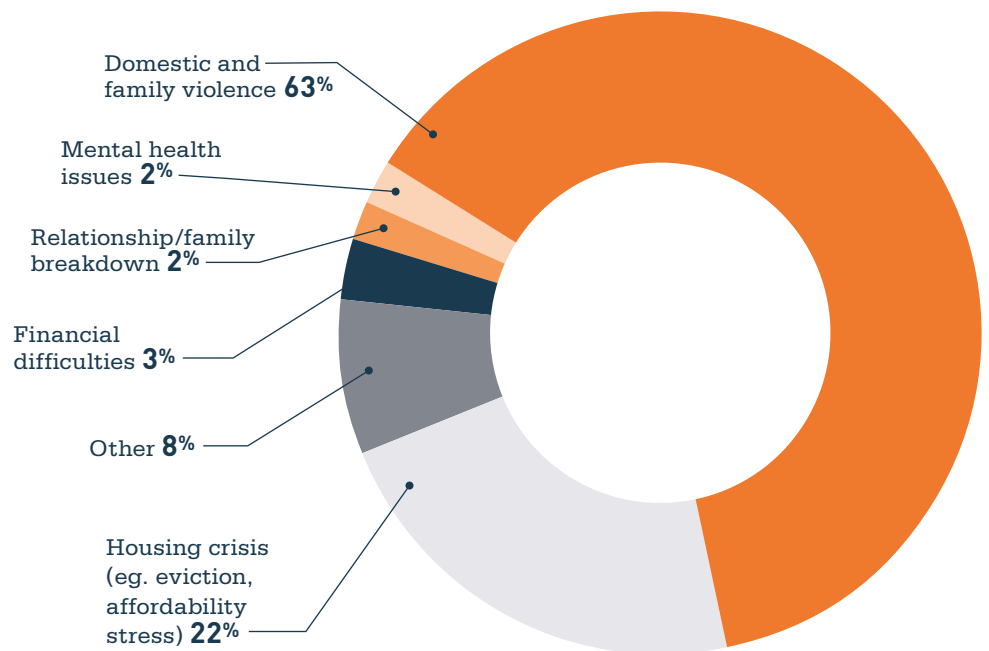
## ABOUT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WE SUPPORT

The reasons women and children are referred to crisis shelters are complex and rarely relate to a single risk factor or vulnerability. Across Australia, the primary presenting cause for women's homelessness is domestic and family violence.

### PRIMARY REASONS FOR REFERRAL

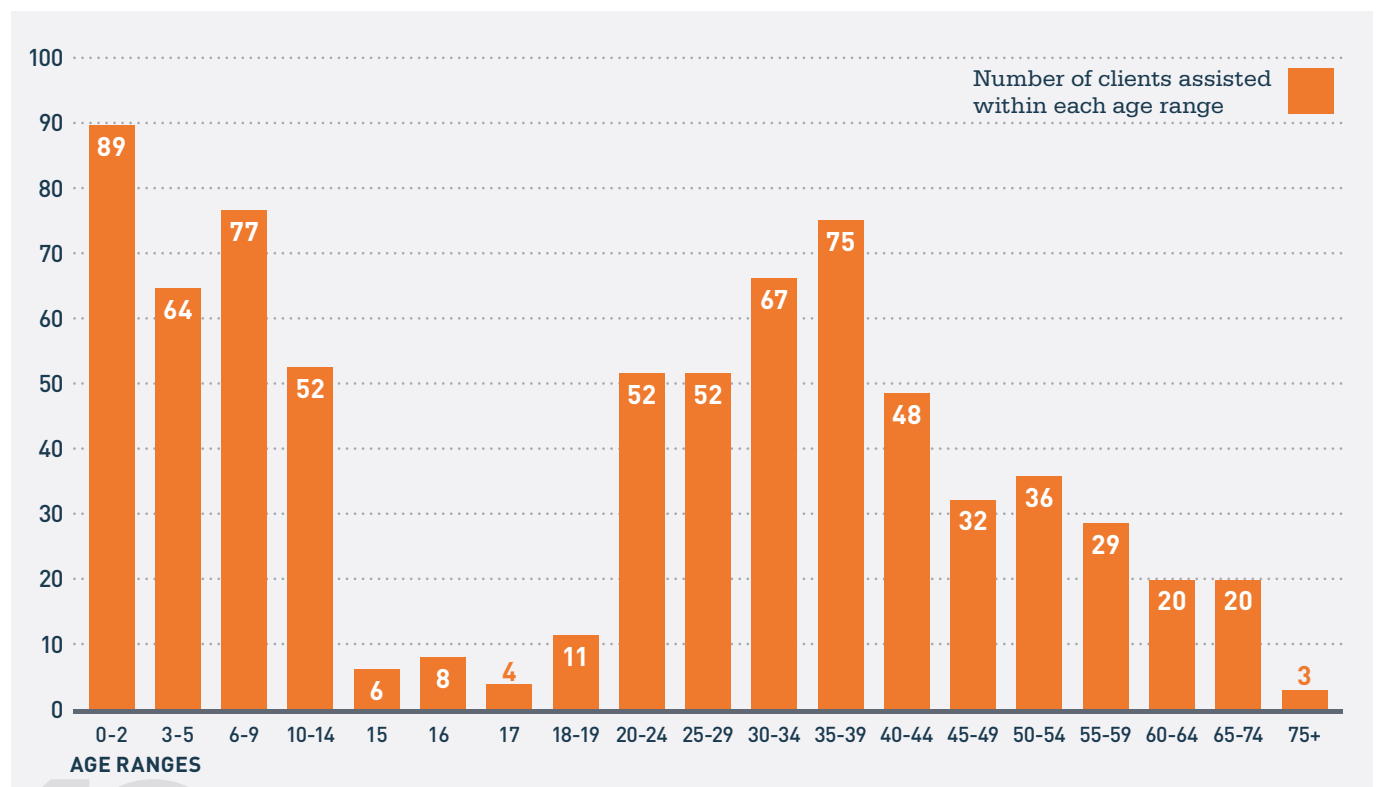
Over 63% of the women and children supported through our Shelter Network were escaping domestic and family violence. A further 22% were at risk of homelessness due to housing crisis.

Mental health issues and financial difficulties were the other primary reasons women presented to our services.



## AGE OF OUR CLIENTS

The majority of women occupying shelters were in the peak working and parenting years aged between 25-49 years of age. This highlights the importance of our return to work and training programs and focus on secure income and housing pathways. Children between 0-9 years make up 28% of Shelter occupancy. This highlights the ongoing need for our Child Support Program.

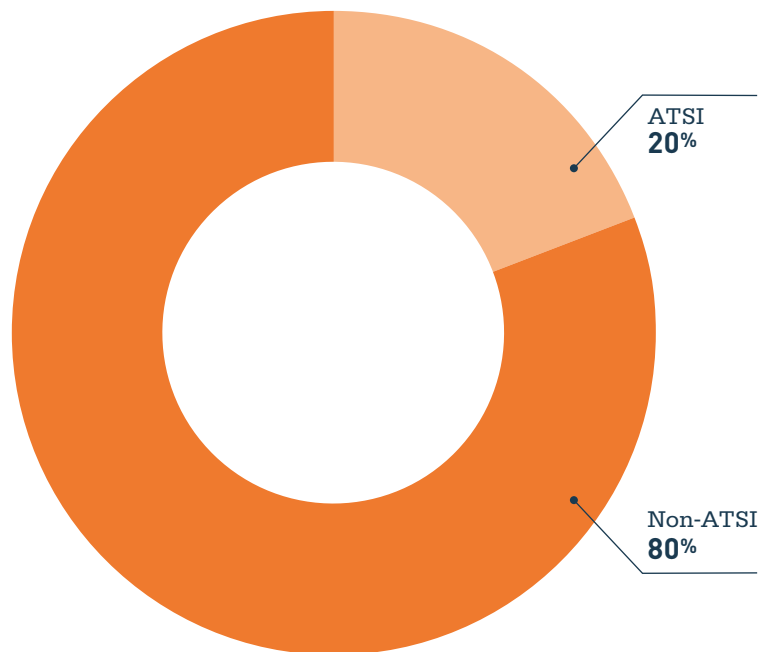


“ The statistics shown here are a reflection of our Shelter Network working through nearly two years of COVID-19 and ongoing restrictions. This in turn had a knock on effect on shelter occupancy, service delivery, and led to increases in Outreach and Transitional Housing support. ”

– WCS, COO Simone Parsons

### NUMBER IDENTIFIED AS ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women make up 20% of the people we support across the network. Our Great Lakes Women's Shelter, in particular, averages nearly 60% percent of women identifying as indigenous.



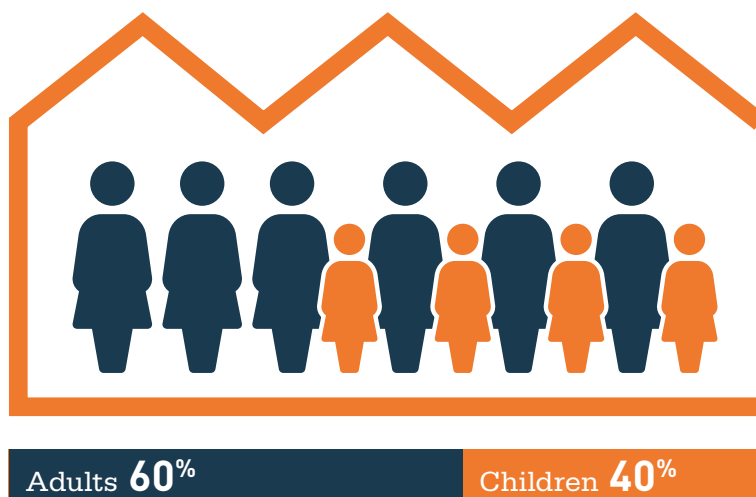
### WE SUPPORTED CLIENTS FROM:

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Afghanistan                | Lebanon                  |
| Armenia                    | Mexico                   |
| Brazil                     | Myanmar                  |
| Bangladesh                 | New Zealand              |
| Cambodia                   | Pakistan                 |
| Central African Republic   | Papua New Guinea         |
| China                      | Peru                     |
| Congo, Republic of         | Philippines              |
| Denmark                    | Poland                   |
| Egypt                      | Russian Federation       |
| England                    | Samoa                    |
| Ethiopia                   | Saudi Arabia             |
| Fiji                       | Sudan                    |
| Germany                    | South Africa             |
| Ghana                      | Sri Lanka                |
| India                      | Thailand                 |
| Indonesia                  | Turkey                   |
| Iran                       | United States of America |
| Iraq                       | Vietnam                  |
| Jordan                     |                          |
| Korea, Republic of (South) |                          |

### WOMEN VS CHILDREN ACCOMMODATED

Almost 40% of the clients supported in the WCS Network are children and young people (under 18 years). In 2021, the largest number of children supported were 0-2 years of age, followed by kids aged 3-9.

These figures highlight the growing need for the WCS Child Support program to ensure every child has a goal directed case plan to meet individual needs and connects them with appropriate services to provide them.



# WCS SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY IS KEY



**This year our spotlight section focuses on the importance of community to the work of WCS and how local community activation, engagement and support are essential to everything we do.**

Each one of our shelters and the communities in which they operate are unique. Although part of the WCS family, each shelter services different client groups, tailors their programs and develops varied community and corporate partnerships to ensure they achieve ongoing success and financial sustainability.

This year, despite COVID-19 and changing restrictions we were able to work with community to open our eighth shelter, Biyani House – Revesby Women's Shelter in January 2022 and have kept the momentum going towards the opening of our ninth shelter, Blue Wren House – Camden Women's Shelter.

## **Shelter Network**

WCS operates a network of eight (soon to be nine) shelters across NSW – each one an affiliated, yet separate incorporated entity, supported by the WCS Hub under a unique Funding and Support Agreement.

Each shelter is established in partnership with community representatives who form an incorporated organisation and Management Committee and who begin the process of building community, partnerships and fundraising for shelter operations.

Each shelter has significant, local supporters and the network is tightknit and mutually supportive. Five shelters accommodate single women and three accommodate women and their children. Seven shelters are located in Sydney and one is in regional NSW.

**Each shelter is established in partnership with community representatives who form an incorporated organisation and Management Committee and who begin the process of building community, partnerships and fundraising for shelter operations.**

**Above, from left:** HKWS Community Forum; HKWS Community event.



## WCS SHELTER NETWORK

### 1 NORTHERN BEACHES WOMEN'S SHELTER (NBWS): MANLY, NOVEMBER 2010

Northern Beaches Women's Shelter is the longest running shelter in the WCS network, opening in November 2010. In their first year of operations, they provided emergency short-term support to over 70 homeless women.

On opening, the shelter had just two properties, but has since expanded to incorporate three rented buildings, one transitional house and most recently through the WCS Pathways Home program, Mosman House, a large Meanwhile Use property offering safe and secure accommodation to 18 women over the age of 50.

Shelter Manager, Narelle Hand, explained how being the inaugural WCS Shelter comes with added responsibilities. "I feel that we hold a level of flagship responsibility to make sure that we hold true vision and values in the way that we operate."

Like all WCS Shelters, developing different layers of community support is critical to the shelter's success, drawing from philanthropic, corporate, government, partners, stakeholders, and individual supporters.

"When someone wants to support our shelter, or be a part of our shelter, they become part of our family. One person can do certain things, but the community working with us, we can do so much more."



Above: NBWS First Aid training. Below left: NBWS receiving donations.

### Servicing Growing Client Needs

In conjunction with providing wrap-around support services, WCS shelters work with other organisations and volunteers to establish a program of activities for the women in-shelter and on exit. These programs continue to grow, reflecting the needs of the clients and the enthusiasm of the community and partners to support them.

Narelle explained the importance of being flexible and agile with developing client-centred programs. A unique program that NBWS runs is called Waves of Wellness, a mental health surfing and wellbeing program.

Narelle explained, "Surfing is a really good way for people to express themselves. You're learning a skill, and there's many synergies between life and surfing. There's a lot of repetition – in surfing, the waves keep coming at you, just like life does. You might get knocked down, but you get back up again. But if you keep chipping away, and you keep giving your energy to try and build that skill, eventually it all just falls into place."

### Continued Support During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the shelter worked at full capacity, supporting 140 women in the last financial year. Despite this

challenging period for the service, there was a continued increase in offers of support and a strengthening in partnerships.

Affectionately named "NBWS Heroes," the key supporters from the NBWS community not only support the shelter financially but enable ongoing improvement to service and operations. Some of these integral partnerships include the Northern Beaches Council, and clothing brand Bassike who have hosted International Women's Day events in support of NBWS over the past three years, contributing over \$200,000 to directly supporting women in crisis.

The continuing funding commitments of regular, long-term partnerships are a key determinant of NBWS' successful longevity and long-term sustainability, allowing the WCS Hub to deliver homelessness services at less than 50% cost on average to Government.

Reflecting on the learnings from NBWS' 12 years of operation, Narelle explained why the work continues to feel purposeful, "You might meet someone at the lowest point in their life, but you see them rebuild, regain confidence, regain skill. And that's something that I take very seriously. And I think that's the best thing about our work".

**2 HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI WOMEN'S SHELTER (HKWS): HORNSBY, FEBRUARY 2015**

Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Women's Shelter (HKWS) opened its doors in February 2015 as the second shelter in the WCS Network. The Shelter can support up to 10 single women at a time, with outreach offered to those who cannot be immediately housed.

In addition to providing crisis accommodation and wrap-around support services, HKWS connects with schools, new services and attends local events to build awareness of the shelter and the issues of homelessness and domestic and family violence.

Shelter Manager, Hylette Evans, has worked at the shelter for seven years, first as a Case Worker before taking on management duties, and knows the importance of activating a local community for support.

Highlighting the mutual respect and pride Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai residents feel coming together to support the shelter, she said, "We can't do what we are doing in a shelter without a community. We also can't do what we are doing without volunteers, the Board and WCS. It really is a collaboration of all partners, working together to make the shelter a success."

In addition to the core focus on crisis accommodation, HKWS was also the first shelter in the WCS network to support the medium-term 'Meanwhile Use' housing response for older women.

**Beecroft House**

HKWS supports and manages Beecroft House, the first large WCS Meanwhile Use Transitional Housing property for women aged over 55, which can house 17 women.

Hylette explained the value of innovative housing solutions for older women: "There aren't many options for older women. It's so sad that some women get to that point in their lives where they should be happily retired. This is the time they've worked for their whole entire life, but instead they find themselves homeless. Beecroft House allows these women to feel safe in a beautiful home, save money for the future and lets them know they have some stability, and no longer need to worry about affordable housing."

**Looking Ahead**

In 2021, after a successful community fundraising campaign, HKWS said goodbye to the rental property that housed the shelter and relocated to

a new permanent home which they purchased. The new property was chosen for its location, its improved layout and scope for extension and improvement to suit the specific needs of their clients. They received unparalleled support from local organisations who rallied together to offer funds, time, materials and specialist services towards the renovations needed to make the Shelter fit for purpose.

Although the move was quite a challenging time for HKWS, a huge learning identified by Hylette is the need for transparency and sharing those challenges with community stakeholders.

"It is not always rosy, but success comes in a lot of different forms. Allowing our stakeholders to understand our challenges, helps them see where the gaps are, where we need support and how they can help. This has been fundamental to our service delivery and success."



**Right, from top:** Quilters and their donations for Beecroft House; The project team at Beecroft House.



### 3 GREAT LAKES WOMEN'S SHELTER (GLWS): FORSTER-TUNCURRY, JANUARY 2016

The Great Lakes Women's Shelter, located in the Forster-Tuncurry region, is the first of WCS' regional shelters. The shelter is currently in the process of building a new purpose-built property, with the land donated by MidCoast Council.

Since opening their doors in January 2016 until November 2021, the shelter has provided supported accommodation to 178 children and 143 women. Of these clients, over half identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Like most WCS shelters, GLWS has several transitional properties, operating in conjunction with the main shelter, meaning that clients can receive continued support once they are no longer in crisis. Up until 2022, all of the GLWS Transitional Housing clients were indigenous.

2021 saw the introduction of a new management position at GLWS. Carly Ravenscroft is now working alongside Shelter Manager Natalie Mulhall, as the new Shelter Operations Manager. We spoke to them both about their unique experience as a regional shelter and how they ensure the service is accessible and culturally safe for Aboriginal women and children.

**“We're doing a lot of Aboriginal focused work in the shelter and devising a lot of our forms and programs and adapting all of our processes to be culturally appropriate.”**



**Above and below right:** Celebrating first footsteps on the new GLWS land; Breaking new ground at GLWS.

### Specialised Tailored Support

As a non-indigenous organisation servicing a high number of indigenous clients, it is important to establish processes that are tailored to such clients, and sensitive to indigenous cultural practices.

“We're doing a lot of Aboriginal focused work in the shelter and devising a lot of our forms and programs and adapting all of our processes to be culturally appropriate. It's a huge process, but it's how we want our shelter to be,” explained Carly.

“We try to attend as many Aboriginal community events as we can. Our uniform is practically NAIDOC shirts, we purchase them for staff, and we wear them daily. We're just trying to embed indigenous culture into our world and into our reputation too.”

When GLWS first opened, they did not receive referrals for indigenous clients. Carly explained how this was a matter of building trust in the community.

“We now have monthly meetings with Aboriginal workers, around any shared clients. This has been key, because when we first started, if you looked at our stats, we weren't getting the indigenous clients, they weren't coming in. We were a new service, we had to build that trust and reputation with the wider Aboriginal community and with Tobwabba [the

Forster Aboriginal medical service], because they are the key service. Tobwabba is where the indigenous clients all go, where they all trust. We had to really build that relationship with them, to then start seeing the numbers of referrals come in.”

There have now been several points where the shelter has had 100 percent indigenous clients at one time, a significant change from when they opened and a clear indicator of the mutual trust and respect that GLWS has successfully developed with their local indigenous community.





### Regionality as a Strength

GLWS regional status is not only reflected in its unique client demographics, but in its case work. Where those shelters in Greater Sydney have easy access to services to support case work such as rental assistance, health specialists etc. GLWS Case Workers have to provide these services themselves.

Shelter Manager, Natalie Mulhall, described this experience, “Filling out forms, doing rental applications and doing victim service applications – we don’t have other support organisations available to help with that. The Case Workers do it all. There’s also no public transport, so we also provide transport.”

This hands-on, high-level approach to their work practice and the provision of a broad range of services is felt by the Forster community at large, with the shelter being well known in the small town.

“You can measure the change in the community. With the increase in referrals, and the number of people that turn up to events. For the candlelight vigil, it was the most horrendous weather. Wind was blowing like a gale, it was freezing cold and rainy. But we still had 100 people show up. Which is huge for our area. They were mostly new people... and that’s when I noticed the increase in engagement.”

### 4 THE SANCTUARY – THE HILLS WOMEN’S SHELTER: CASTLE HILL, APRIL 2016

The Sanctuary – The Hills Women’s Shelter was the fourth shelter to open its doors, in April 2016 and provides a calm, safe haven for up to six women and children.

Located in the Castle Hill district, the large family shelter is a great example of a successful community partnership as it was donated rent free by QIC, the owners of Castle Towers, initially for three years, followed by annual extensions of rent-free occupancy.

With six bedrooms, five bathrooms, two kitchens and two lounge areas, it is one of the largest WCS shelters and when it first opened, it broke new ground as it was one of the first shelters to offer access for women with a disability thanks to its modified bathroom and bedroom.

One of WCS’ major philanthropic partners, the PAYCE Foundation was instrumental in supporting The Sanctuary, with a three-year financial commitment to assist its early establishment. Since then, PAYCE has continued their support of WCS supporting the Meanwhile Use program, Pathways Home, and most recently by supporting our Parramatta Women’s Shelter property and neighbouring properties for Transitional Housing.

Between 2016 and 2021, The Sanctuary supported 509 women and children and in 2021, they accommodated 41 women and 51 children, the most clients and children of any WCS shelter. It is no surprise given these statistics, that their practice has a significant focus on the wellbeing and development of the children in their care.

### Sensory Strategies for Children Affected by Trauma

Shelter Manager Brigitte Lees believes in the importance of creating a safe and welcoming space for the children who stay at the shelter and has found the introduction of sensory toys have been crucial in this effort.

“Sensory toys have been developed for all age brackets from babies to teens and are as diverse in their range as the clients themselves. Sensory toys can be developed for touch, sound and visual and can include pliable materials, toys that make noises, colourful or soft neutral shades and toys that promote fine motor skills.”

Approximately 20 percent of the children and young people who present at The Sanctuary have some type of disability or behavioural issue.

Brigitte explained, “Almost all of the children and young people who present aged two years and over have some level of anxiety or depression from the trauma of having experienced or having been exposed to domestic and family violence.



Right: A beautiful bedroom at The Sanctuary – The Hills Women's Shelter.



**Above:** A sensory space for shelter kids.

Sensory play encourages learning through exploration, curiosity, problem solving and creativity. It helps to build nerve connections in the brain and encourages the development of language and motor skills.

### **Kids Helping Kids**

An essential element of the work of WCS lies in advocacy and education, which are the first steps necessary for prevention. The Sanctuary, with its close ties to several schools in the Hills region demonstrates these efforts.

“Whenever there's something like Easter, Christmas, International Women's Day, or Harmony Week, we'll always have one or two of the schools doing a fundraiser or raising awareness.”

Many of these relationships with local schools are thanks to Walk the Talk, one of WCS's flagship education programs.

The Sanctuary is so well established within the Hills school district, that individual students have begun to donate or even spearhead fundraisers or donation drives on behalf of the shelter.

“Kids save their birthday money, and their mums will contact you, asking for example; do you need some pyjamas or some sunscreen? They want to buy it with their own money.”

One Year 6 student, from a local primary school organised 119 backpacks filled with school supplies in an effort to help ease the transition to a new school for children in shelter.

The generosity and compassion shown by these students clearly demonstrates the success of education and advocacy in the efforts toward prevention.

“ Kids save their birthday money, and their mums will contact you, asking for example; do you need some pyjamas or some sunscreen? They want to buy it with their own money. ”

One Year 6 student, from a local primary school organised 119 backpacks filled with school supplies in an effort to help ease the transition to a new school for children in shelter.



**Right, from top:**  
A safe space at The Sanctuary – The Hills Women's Shelter;  
A collection of Easter treats.





**Above:** The Haven – Nepean Women’s Shelter Breakfast fundraiser.  
**Bottom right:** Tending to the garden.

## 5 THE HAVEN – NEPEAN WOMEN’S SHELTER: PENRITH, APRIL 2018

The Haven – Nepean Women’s Shelter was established in 2017, in direct response to the growing need in the Penrith area for women’s crisis accommodation. In the 2016/2017 period, there were an estimated 1,094 incidents of domestic violence reported in Penrith alone. Estimates suggest this was just the tip of the iceberg.

The Haven – Nepean Women’s Shelter was a collective response to this call for help. A safe haven for women escaping domestic and family violence and homelessness.

Samantha Campbell joined The Haven as a Founding Board member and became Shelter Manager in 2017, before going on maternity leave in 2020. Returning to the role in 2021, Samantha is extremely aware of the significance of community connection, creating trauma-informed spaces, and what makes a house, a home.

### Bridging the Gap

Samantha explained, “What we do is bridge the gap between community and shelter. Through establishing strong community connections, be it through volunteers, local schools and business owners, we are able to tell the story of The Haven, which inherently they take back to their friends, families and their networks. What people learn is, at the end of the day it’s just women, in a home, trying to re-build their lives.”

When it comes to community, The Haven is particularly proud of its dedicated base of volunteers whose commitment to supporting the shelter has remained strong and consistent, despite the myriad of challenges posed by COVID-19.

“Our core volunteers are a really strong support. They are born through our strong community engagement, and their commitment is palpable. Throughout COVID-19, our maintenance support still came and mowed our lawns, and we had volunteers going and doing grocery shopping and deliveries for clients to reduce the possibility of infection.”

### Wellbeing Programs

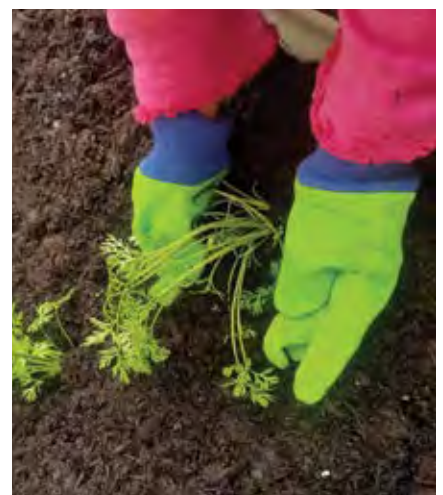
“We do our Wednesday Wellness Program – which is really a community program,” explained Samantha. “Our Cultural Cooking program invites a resident each month to cook a cultural meal. We sit together, learn why this dish matters to the resident culturally, what those impacts are, and how it connects with their culture and in particular the women in their culture. While we’re sitting around the table, we share stories. It’s a real sharing piece.”

Cultural Cooking is only one example of the community connection that happens within the walls of The Haven. Samantha encourages residents to join in on their Movement sessions, the aim of which is to connect recovery from trauma.

“Typically, we invite a female small business owner, usually a yoga teacher or a PT, to run sessions that model what clients can achieve, what self-led, self-employed life can look like. The benefits of a program like this are two-fold.”

### Essential Engagement

Community engagement on this level (The Haven also invites local artists to run craft days, where clients can learn to knit or sew, activities they can do in the middle of the night to self-soothe) work to bridge the gap between community and shelter in a way that has long lasting impacts. “Every program we run, every advocacy piece, plays its part in breaking the stigma of women’s homelessness.”







Re-establishing community connection in a post-COVID world was what originally drew Samantha to WCS.

“As a prior domestic violence Case Worker, community connection was the missing piece. You can put a roof over people’s heads, but if you don’t re-establish safety in community, the stigma remains, and the cycle perpetuates. The WCS model is all about engaging local communities and enabling change from the ground up and they do this so well.”

### A Trauma-Informed Service

The Haven has worked to forge a space that is trauma-informed. The goal of trauma-informed spaces is to promote safety, well-being and healing. For a women’s shelter, these design principles are paramount – and something The Haven does exceptionally well.

This is profoundly evident throughout the entirety of the Shelter, from the murals that hang on the walls, to the decision to change the bedroom titles from numbers to motifs of hope. “There is a daisy room, and a rainbow room,” Samantha mused. It’s creating warmth through texture and design that “creates a home, not a clinical setting”.

### Delivering Diversity

Intersectionality, an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person’s social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege, is also something that is firmly on the agenda for The Haven, as they move towards creating a space that caters to the individual needs of a very diverse demographic of women.

“Our journey to becoming more intersectional began with developing specific supports for women on temporary visas. The Haven was incredibly instrumental in the early years of WCS, to pave some solid pathways for women on no visas.”

The Haven isn’t just stopping at cultural diversity. Their partnership with Disability Australia on the Building Access Project, has enabled the Shelter to develop a Disability Inclusion Manual, providing greater access to clients with disabilities.

The Haven is eager to be at the forefront of this intersectional approach to Shelter management and develop manuals with processes and procedures that highlight just how they work with clients with differing needs, with a view to sharing this within the whole WCS Network.

When asked whether community engagement was essential to the success of the Haven, Samantha offered, “It’s actually the foundation.” COVID-19 had played a significant role in putting barriers between community and individuals, “It cut all of us off from our communities; religious, cultural, family, friends – we all had these barriers placed upon us. And although the Shelter still functioned during COVID-19, it was just the essence of a Shelter – a roof over people’s heads, some food in the tummy. We realised, it’s actually community that makes this a home.”

Above left: A space for the children.

Below: WTT students supporting their local shelter.



**6 BAYSIDE WOMEN'S SHELTER (BWS): BOTANY, DECEMBER 2018**

Bayside Women's Shelter threw open its doors in 2017 and features six bedrooms accommodating women, with or without children, who are escaping family and domestic violence in the South-East Sydney area.

We spoke with Shelter Manager Allison, and General Manager, Sallianne, on the profound impact of community and corporate engagement in running a successful, sustainable women's shelter.

A communal-living space, BWS was hit hard by COVID-19. In particular, the pandemic put a stop to all in-person fundraising activities. Prior to the pandemic, the Shelter would host and attend events, hold market stalls and a variety of other face-to-face activities that would both engage their local community, and raise the critical funds necessary to sustain the Shelter.

**Online Support**

"Off the back of COVID-19, our approach to fundraising had to change," explained Sallianne. "We turned to our advocacy across social media, which became a vital tool to engage our supporter base."

Staff at Bayside do advocacy exceptionally well. A scroll of their social media channels showcases their deep commitment to shedding a light on the pervasiveness of domestic and family violence, advocating strongly for a world free from gender-based violence. "It's incredibly important to us to have a voice in the community," explained Sallianne. "Connecting with our local community on these significant issues is essential."



Above: Inside Bayside Women's Shelter.

**Corporate Support**

BWS engages a plethora of community groups and corporate partners that work, dedicatedly, to walk alongside them and the women and children they support. "Our local MPs are so committed to our cause," continued Allison. "They are the go-to drop-off point for donations. Everyone in the community knows that's where you take items to support the Shelter... Building good, strong relationships like this is so important to us."

Sallianne and Allison also sight their local bank, a founding partner of the Shelter, as another critical community support. "Their community scheme is run in such a way, that they have a dedicated collection bin out the front of their bank, branded in support of the Shelter. We receive an influx of donations through this partnership, and the exposure it provides," explained Sallianne. "As a result of this founding partner, we receive grant opportunities, and gifts in-kind as well."

From a sustainability perspective, "These relationships are critical to us," emphasised Allison. When reflecting on the food items that are delivered on a regular basis, Allison said, "We are so grateful for the fact that we really don't buy much... We receive donations from community, or from the non-profit organisation Two Good (who deliver prepared meals to the Shelter), the women here do not have to spend a cent on food if they choose not to. There is enough for everyone, and that all comes from community. They sustain us".

Sallianne and Allison note their relationships with corporate partners such as a local stationery supplier, who, on the back of some of Bayside's advocacy pieces on social media, had reached out with an eagerness to support. "After an initial chat, they held a Christmas donations drive for us, engaged with us on International Women's Day through a panel on gender-inequality. Local community and local people. This is where the magic partnerships are born," explained Sallianne.

**“...they held a Christmas donations drive for us, engaged with us on International Women's Day... Local community and local people. This is where the magic partnerships are born,” explained Sallianne.**



## 7 PARRAMATTA WOMEN'S SHELTER (PWS): PARRAMATTA, DECEMBER 2019

Parramatta Women's Shelter, located in the Parramatta LGA, had a challenging start to its first few months of operation, opening in late December 2019, just prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shelter Manager, Tania Smith, explained some of the challenges, "Connecting to the community took a little more time than it may have otherwise. Reaching out and forming relationships with key stakeholders was challenging during COVID-19 and lockdown."

### A Haven for Families

PWS does critical work in the local community. It is the only shelter in NSW geared to supporting larger families and is unique as it comprises three separate crisis spaces for families, rather than shared accommodation as per the traditional WCS Shelter Model.

Most other shelters in NSW cannot accommodate women with larger numbers of children due to the ageing nature of shelter infrastructure. As well as housing larger families with older male children, PWS is also able to accommodate pets due to a grant from The Domestic and Family Violence Pets and Animal Welfare Support (DFV PAWS) program.

Tania explained, "We've been able to house larger families, and families with older boys. I know a lot of shelters and other refuges are not able or refuse to take older teenage boys. Being able to have a whole family attend with their animals has just been amazing. We have seen some fantastic outcomes because of that."

In addition to outreach and Transitional Housing support, WCS shelters provide women in-shelter with access to wrap-around support services including assistance to access affordable housing, medical and psychological referrals, legal and justice assistance, and employment and education pathways. Linking with key services such as schools, GPs, vets have been integral for establishment of client-centred best practice at PWS.

### In Praise of Payce

A key founding partner of PWS is the PAYCE Foundation who initially donated the use of two houses for a period of two years to the organisation.

Developing such unique partnerships and building interagency relationships has provided Tania and her staff vital advocacy opportunities, including providing vital feedback and advice to local councils and community centres on upcoming plans and projects regarding domestic violence and local community development.

These include the Ryde Hunters Hill Council interagency group and the Cumberland Parramatta DV interagency group and extends to local services such as Cumberland Women's Health Centre and Harris Park Community Centre. PWS is also one of six community groups in the Melrose Park Community Group who join together to arrange events, fundraising initiatives, and projects for the Melrose Park local area.

### Advocacy Piece

Community activation is an important avenue for change in the response to domestic violence and when asked how the Shelter Network can continue to enact the change WCS would like to see in the sector, Tania commented, "By ensuring that our service is diverse and equal, ensuring that we have equal opportunities, engaging in policy, debates, raising issues and awareness in the local community, debunking myths, engaging in partnerships, and being active in protest! Continuing to do the work we do and making sure that the clients and the kids are really at the forefront of everything we do".



Right, from top: PWS celebrating International Women's Day; A day at Taronga Zoo for local leaders; PWS fundraiser.



**8 BIYANI HOUSE – REVESBY WOMEN’S SHELTER: REVESBY, JANUARY 2022**

Biyani House – Revesby Women’s Shelter was incorporated on 21 April 2021 and officially opened in January 2022, making it the eighth shelter in the WCS network.

The shelter has a volunteer board, made up of local residents with a mix of skills to support the staff and who oversee its governance, as well as raising funds to keep the shelter going.

Shelter Manager, Marina Yacoub, was employed in October 2021 and has been instrumental in preparing the shelter for opening, hiring staff and engaging the local community for support.

Marina has a wealth of experience having worked in the Canterbury-Bankstown homelessness sector for the past several years and has always recognised the need for more services in the area.

“There was a real need for a shelter in this area because with the high

amount of DV here, it’s the area where we have the least shelters, so this shelter has actually filled a very important need for women and children who don’t have a place to flee if they’re experiencing DV,” said Marina.

Since opening, Biyani House has had a positive effect on the growth and community perception of such services developed specifically to address the accommodation needs of homeless women and the importance of the shelter has been recognised by the wider Revesby community.

This has been evident by the overwhelming amount of support the shelter has received in the process of establishment and in its first three months of operation.

On 16 June 2021, Revesby Workers’ Club donated the shelter property, at a peppercorn rent of \$1 per year, for up to 20 years. They have also supported the shelter recently by hosting an International Women’s Day luncheon, with all proceeds going directly to the shelter. Members of the club have also formed a regular ladies gardening group, planting flowers at the shelter and teaching those clients who are interested various gardening techniques.

“It’s equally essential [in comparison to monetary and physical donations] that people who donate their time or their effort to support us, feel that they are doing something good for their local community and it is these little gestures that make a huge difference to our shelter,” explained Marina.

Biyani House offers crisis accommodation, with wrap-around support for up to five women, with or without dependent children, who are homeless or escaping domestic and family violence.



**THE NAME BIYANI WAS CHOSEN** as it is the indigenous name of a women’s ceremony specifically for the healing of women. Biyani is from the Sydney D’harawal language which contains many words that overlap with other Sydney language groups who also share this Country, such as those of the Dharug, Gundungara and Guringai people.

The Biyani House logo, reflects the structure of the dianella flower which tells the local D’harawal story of Pokulbi, the wren, who suffered violence inflicted on her by her partner. The story teaches people the important lesson that violence will never be tolerated in our communities.

.....  
**Left:** Working bee at Biyani House – Revesby Women’s Shelter.



**Above:** Members of Revesby Workers' Club at Biyani House – Revesby Women's Shelter. **Below right:** A beautiful place to eat.

“It's equally essential [in comparison to monetary and physical donations] that people who donate their time or their effort to support us, feel that they are doing something good for their local community and it is these little gestures that make a huge difference to our shelter,” explained Marina.

One of WCS's key partners, online homewares and furniture retailer Temple & Webster, has donated furniture, furnishing and styling services to the network since 2018, and most recently helped furnish and style Biyani House. King Living Foundation also supported the shelter with furniture items.

“The products from Temple & Webster have been fantastic. When we receive clients who are undergoing hardships, most of them come from disadvantaged backgrounds, they get a clean bed, paintings on the walls, books to read, nice sofa, new blankets... they know that they are appreciated. These little things may not be important to us, but for the residents, it's a very good thing to feel that they are respected and appreciated and to feel that we are giving them the best.”

### **Difference is Diversity**

One of Revesby's most notable points of difference, is its diversity. The Canterbury-Bankstown LGA is one of Greater Sydney's more significantly culturally and linguistically diverse regions, with over 60 percent of its residents reporting speaking a language other than English at home. This has been clearly reflected in the referrals to Biyani House.

“Currently, we have seven residents in shelters. Out of the seven there are six residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and that actually affects our case work practice. Working with Australian residents who are already born in Australia, they know the system, they have been here all their life, they know how to get along with Centrelink, how to fill in applications by themselves. But when you have most of the residents who will have been here for only a few years and cannot speak English, it's challenging because of the language barrier, because of the lack of awareness about their rights, about the lack of services.”

Marina, who has a culturally and linguistically diverse background herself, has found her knowledge of Arabic, which is the second most spoken language in the area after English, to be a significant asset.





**9 BLUE WREN HOUSE  
– CAMDEN WOMEN’S  
SHELTER (BWH):  
CAMDEN, DUE 2022**

The concept for Camden’s Blue Wren House was initiated in 2016, when the community of Camden came together with a vision to take action and respond to the growing rate of homeless women and children in their LGA, due to domestic and family violence.

Due to open in 2022, Blue Wren House has faced a number of delays, predominantly due to COVID-19, yet has made significant strides in rallying community support towards the establishment of shelter number nine in the WCS network.

From construction companies to project managers, quilt makers to Op Shops, the Camden community is determined to make Blue Wren House, the only Shelter in the Camden LGA, a safe, supported home for the five women and their dependent children it can support at any given time.

Board member, Denise Pritchard, spoke about the Blue Wren House journey to date, and what’s next in store.

“We identified the perfect site for a women’s shelter, in walking distance of everything,” said Denise, who has been on the Board of Blue Wren House since its infancy. “Immediately, community support appeared.”

Denise and the Board were delighted by an influx of local community members who expressed eager interest in assisting with the construction of the Shelter very early on. “We posted a shoutout on Facebook looking for trades. Within 24 hours, the phone was buzzing off the hook. We were completely overwhelmed with offers of support,” reflected Denise.



**Above:** Blue Wren House Community Forum. **Below right:** Turning the first sod of soil at Blue Wren House – Camden Women’s Shelter.

Within days, a plumber had shown up at the site, followed shortly thereafter by Mark King of King Homes. “Mark and King Homes,” she emphasised, “are deeply generous. What we couldn’t get donated, they managed to call in”. From that initial conversation with the Blue Wren House Board, Mark had offered his services as a project manager. The power of social media in reaching the local community had already proven incredibly powerful.

Shortly thereafter, COVID-19 hit, putting a devastating cease on construction. “This was our greatest setback, throughout the entire development process,” said Denise. COVID-19 caused supply-chain issues, with necessary supplies like steel for the roofing and deck becoming unavailable. Construction sites were forced to close, and when re-opened, trades were scarce and stretched to capacity. “It was a difficult period and it became very hard to finalise anything,” continued Denise.

Despite this, as COVID-19 restrictions eased, the community bounced right back, and construction of the Shelter was back on the table. When asked why Denise believes the Camden community to be so dedicated to supporting the Shelter, she offered, “Everyone is really giving because, unfortunately, everyone is touched

by DV in some way. Even if you don’t necessarily know who, there is someone you know who is impacted.”

Denise attributes the initial success of the Shelter’s establishment to the people of Camden. “The Camden community is extremely generous, and the power of our community connections has been critical.”

Denise emphasised the significant impact that the unique partnership between Blue Wren House and local Opportunity Shop, Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, has made to the Shelter – even before it opened its doors.





“Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard is an Op Shop exclusively for women escaping domestic violence,” explained Denise. “They provide beds, sheets, linen, towels, furniture for women in crisis – all for free.”

Support of the Camden community has presented in unique and varied ways. Another crucial win for Blue Wren House is the support of the Camden Valley Inn, who will donate funds every year for the next five years towards operational costs, as part of the Shelter’s ‘Porchlight Program’. These donations will support the Case Workers, medical, legal and educational support programs that help women rebuild their lives.

General Manager of the Inn, Kayla Seeney, has commented that “a strong sense of community and providing a safe place for our locals to connect are at the heart of the Camden Valley Inn.” Again, the large heart of Camden had proven itself a pivotal player in the Blue Wren House development.

“The opportunity for community engagement is everywhere, you just have to be willing to ask,” concluded Denise.

**“Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard is an Op Shop exclusively for women escaping domestic violence,” explained Denise. “They provide beds, sheets, linen, towels, furniture for women in crisis – all for free.”**



**From top, left to right:**  
 GLWS President Julie Brady and Stephen Bromhead MP; BWS Board; GLWS art workshops; GLWS staff; Artwork donation for BWH; Shelter Manager meeting at the Hub.

# PEOPLE & STRUCTURE

## THE CHARITY

Women's Community Shelters Ltd (trading as Women's Community Shelters) is a DGR1 charity, registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC). WCS is a company limited by guarantee (ACN: 153 006 556) and a Public Benevolent Institution. WCS is governed by its Constitution, with the utmost commitment to transparency, accountability and governance.



## OUR BOARD



**Julie White (Chair)**  
Julie White has over 40 years' experience in both not-for-profit and corporate sectors. She is currently Chair and Director of Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation; Independent Director of Ability First Australia; and a member of Chief Executive Women and the Australian Institute of Company. She is also Independent Chair of COORDINARE (SE NSW PHN). *Julie took over the role of Chair in May 2022, when Kris Neill stepped down.*



**Peter Hunt AM**  
Peter is a philanthropist involved in funding, developing and scaling social sector organisations and the founder of WCS. As an investment banker Peter advised local and multi-national companies and governments in Australia. Peter became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2010 for services to the philanthropic sector.



**Paul Say**  
Paul has over 40 years' experience in commercial property with Lendlease, Dexus and JLL. Currently he is a non-executive director of listed company Cedar Woods and several HNW Family Offices providing governance, transactional and strategic advice. Paul is a Fellow of the AIV and RICS and a qualified property valuer.



**Emily Hodgson**  
Emily Hodgson is Chief Financial Officer at Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). Emily is also a member of Ashfield Council and Inner West Council Audit and Risk Committee, where she oversees the Councils' governance, internal controls, financial reporting and internal and external audit.



**Kris Neill**  
Kris Neill is the Managing Director of Kris Neill Consulting. She is a leading corporate brand and reputation strategist with global experience. A former Macquarie Group Executive Director, she is also a board member of the Melba Opera Trust. Kris has more than 25 years' experience as an executive in corporate communications strategy and government affairs. *Kris stepped down as Chair in April 2022 after 10 years with WCS.*



**Sr Mary-Louise Petro**  
Sister Mary-Louise Petro is a Sister of Mercy, of the Parramatta Congregation. In 1985, Mary-Louise founded The Mamre Project at St Marys, which assisted the unemployed, people with a disability, youth at risk and refugees. Mary-Louise is currently the Congregation Leader for her order.



**Terence Kwan**  
As Division Director at Macquarie Group, Terence has collaborated with the Macquarie Group Foundation for many years and chaired his business division's philanthropic arm from 2013 to 2019. Terence is a board director for Radio Community Chest Incorporated and formerly a board member at non-profit One Disease, which works with remote indigenous communities in Australia.



**Daniel Martin**  
Daniel has 20 years' experience in philanthropy and engagement across the non-profit, secondary schools and University sectors. Working primarily in the fields of medicine and education, Daniel has led large philanthropic campaigns and worked with groups such as the Fred Hollows Foundation, University of Sydney and UNSW Sydney. Daniel serves as Director of Foundation and Executive Officer for St Aloysius' College Milsons Point.

**WCS would also like to thank our past Board alumni, who have all been integral to WCS' ongoing success over the last 10 years.**

- Gina Anderson
- Greg Hutchinson
- Christine Parker
- Richard Spencer
- Paul Kelly
- Shenaz Khan
- Betty Ivanoff



## Board Committees

The Board has a number of committees to support the fulfillment of its governance responsibilities. Involvement in such committees allows WCS directors to deepen their knowledge of the organisation, become more actively engaged and fully utilise their experience.

## Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee

This committee is a formally constituted committee of WCS. It has responsibility to assist and advise WCS in fulfilling its corporate governance and independent oversight responsibilities in relation to the charity's management of risk, compliance with legislation and standards, audit requirements, external reporting responsibilities and regulatory obligations.

## Nomination and Remuneration Committee

The role of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee is to examine the selection and appointment practices of the charity, address Board succession issues and ensure that the Board has the appropriate skills, knowledge, experience and diversity to enable it to discharge its duties and responsibilities effectively, although the Board retains ultimate responsibility for these practices.

## Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee is a standing committee with the purpose of raising funds to insure the financial viability and stability of the charity.



Above, from top: Strategy day at the WCS Hub; First day back in the office at the Hub after the COVID-19 lockdown.

## OUR STRUCTURE

WCS works to a “hub and spoke” social franchise model. The Hub underpins the Shelter Network and is funded entirely from private funding sources. It provides four pillars of support to local communities interested in establishing shelters:

- **Project Management Support** – ‘walking alongside’ a local community to establish the legal structure of the shelter organisation, find the right property, engage local stakeholders in support and employ the right staff;
- **‘Shelter-in-a-box’ intellectual property** – all of the policies and procedures, templates, job descriptions, computer systems, outcomes measurement systems required to run a shelter on a day-to-day basis;
- **Funding support** – meeting half the set-up costs of each shelter, two-thirds of the funding for operations for the first two years, and half per annum in years following;
- **Ongoing network support** for governance, HR, and operational matters to ensure quality in service delivery and excellent NFP oversight.

The organisation is well connected to the broader DFV and Homelessness sectors with its CEO serving as the Chair of the DVNSW Board and others through membership, including Homelessness NSW, Women's Safety NSW, The Fundraising Institute of Australia and the ACNC.



WCS employs 16 staff at its head office (Hub) in Surry Hills, seven full time and nine part time, all working together to support the network of WCS shelters and growing portfolio of transitional properties.

The WCS Hub consists of different teams who work collaboratively to underpin the Shelter Network and transitional properties. Many of the Hub staff work across a number of different teams that have been put in place to help with shelter operations, policies and procedures, housing, communications, fundraising and finance.

## WCS HUB TEAMS



**SENIOR EXECUTIVE:** (From left to right) Annabelle Daniel OAM and Simone Parsons



**ADMIN TEAM:** Tasmin Hill, Grace Moscou, Lieske Dowd, Gen Sini



**PRACTICE TEAM:**  
Sue Cripps, Lieske Dowd, Simone Parsons, Donna Bourke, Maddy Neely, Kate DeSalvo



**ENGAGEMENT TEAM:**  
Claudia Brooks, Nat Peacock, Libby Gauld



**HOUSING AND MEANWHILE USE TEAM:**  
Maddy Neely, Simone Parsons, Kate DeSalvo



**FINANCE TEAM:** Uma Ramaprasad, Lieske Dowd, Simone Parsons



**WALK THE TALK TEAM:**  
Dannielle Miller and Jack Ellis



Chief Executive Officer:  
Annabelle Daniel OAM (f/t)



Chief Operations Officer:  
Simone Parsons (f/t)



Director of Development:  
Libby Gauld (p/t)



Director of Education and Special Projects:  
Dannielle Miller OAM (p/t)



Education Officer:  
Jack Ellis (p/t)

The WCS Hub is solely funded from private sources which means all Hub staff salaries are funded via philanthropic, corporate or community support. This means the Government funding WCS receives towards seven of its eight shelters is forwarded in full to the frontline services of our Shelter Network. Biyani House – Revesby Women’s Shelter receives no Government funding.



Finance Officer:  
Uma Ramaprasad (p/t)



Business Manager, Capacity and Operations:  
Lieske Dowd (p/t)



Head of Partnerships and Communications:  
Nathalie Peacock (f/t)



Manager of Housing Projects:  
Maddy Neely (f/t)



Shelter Practice Lead: Donna Cavanagh (p/t)



Practice and Quality Lead:  
Sue Cripps (p/t)



Administration Officer:  
Grace Moscou (p/t)



Administration Officer:  
Tasmin Hill (f/t)



Outcomes Officer:  
Gen Sini (p/t)



Digital Media and Engagement Officer:  
Claudia Brooks (f/t)



Meanwhile Use Program Coordinator:  
Kate DeSalvo (f/t)

# SOCIAL FRANCHISE MODEL

**WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS** is a social franchise model, delivering tangible outcomes and community change for women and children who are homeless or leaving domestic or family violence. It does this by activating community capacity and partnerships to deliver emergency crisis accommodation, Transitional Housing, outreach, child support, early intervention and prevention education programs and sector advocacy and leadership.

The model is unique in the DV sector as it is supported by diversified funding from corporate and individual philanthropy and community fundraising.

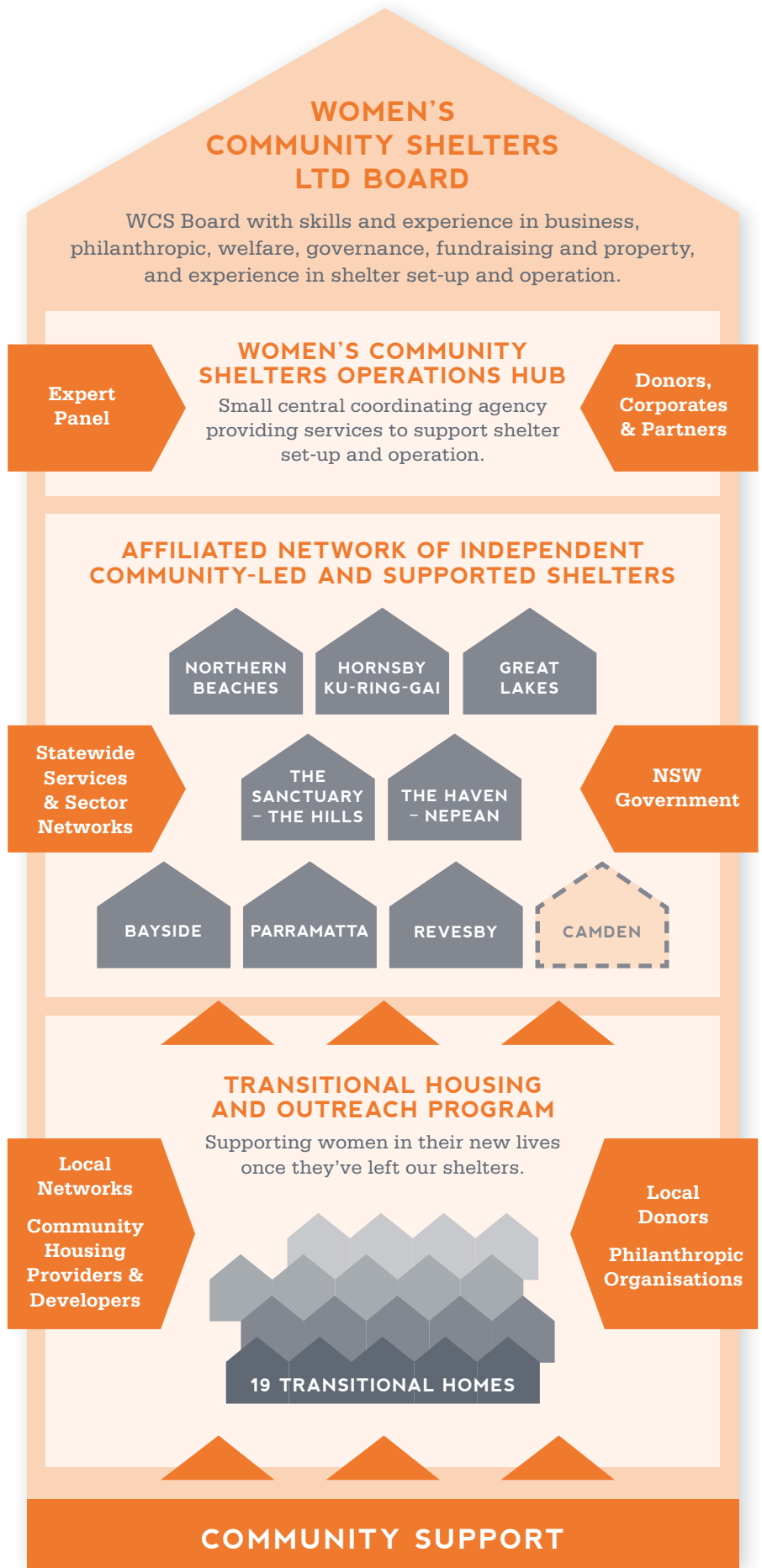
WCS receives minimum Government funding for its shelters and its head office (Hub) is solely funded by philanthropy.

The strength of the model is its replicability and sustainability. The model leverages the goodwill of local community and corporate groups and helps WCS set up and maintain community-operated crisis accommodation shelters across Sydney. Once the shelters are established, WCS provides ongoing referral, counselling support for the women and children we support.

**Stronger Together:**  
**“To have that unique partnership with WCS, as well as having the other shelters in the network, where you can bounce things off the other managers, has been great. You've got those cross-referral pathways and this additional knowledge that you can tap into.”**

**PWS Shelter Manager, Tania reflecting on WCS' social franchise model.**

The diagram shown illustrates our relationship with all stakeholders.





# INDIVIDUAL SHELTER MODEL



**IN 2021, WCS HAS EXPANDED** and grown into a respected sector leader with eight (nearly nine) shelters across its network – each one an affiliated, yet separate incorporated entity, secured to the WCS Hub under a unique Funding and Support Agreement.

Each of our shelters\* is funded through a mix of NSW State Government funding (around 48% through WCS) and the balance through philanthropy and community fundraising.

The women and children are always at the centre of what we do and why we do it and are cared for and supported by our Shelter Managers, Case Workers, Shelter Boards and their local community.

\* Biyani House – Revesby Women's Shelter receives no government funding.

# WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

**We extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to the donors and supporters who continue to walk alongside us in our vital work supporting women and children escaping homelessness and domestic and family violence.**

**Our work would not be possible without you and we are incredibly grateful.**

## PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORTERS

- 8 Mile Trust
- Alternative Future Foundation
- ATS Perpetual Charitable Foundation
- Bell Family Foundation
- Bob and Candi Burger Trust
- Camceda Pty Ltd ITF Roberts Family Foundation
- Cooper Tuxen Foundation
- Dawkins Family
- Full Stop Foundation Inc
- Goodman Foundation
- Hedge Funds Rock
- Hunt Family Foundation
- i=Change (and all retailers)
- Illyria Pty Ltd
- John and Michele Shanahan Charitable Trust
- Lambert Bridge Foundation
- Macdoch Foundation
- Mary Alice Foundation
- Mostyn Foundation
- Mutual Trust
- NAB Foundation
- PAYCE Foundation
- PwC Australia
- Sky Foundation
- St George Foundation
- St Michael's Fund
- Stanford Brown Charitable Foundation
- Stranfield Pty Limited – The Vernon Foundation
- Susan Blackley Trust
- Ronald Geoffrey Arnott Foundation
- Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
- The Adolph Basser Trust
- The Cath Leary Social Justice Foundation
- The Harris Charitable Foundation
- The Horizon Foundation
- The Neilson Foundation
- The Tribuo Foundation
- Vernon Foundation
- VGI Partners Foundation
- Vonwiller Foundation
- Wiggs Foundation
- Yarranabbe Foundation

## CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

- Anglesea Gynaecology
- Apero Label
- Australian Women in Logistics
- BUG Communication
- Camilla
- Christophe Denoux
- City of Sydney
- Credit Suisse Management Australia (PL)
- DrivenxDesign
- Gene Pty Limited
- HighLow Markets Pty Ltd
- Hummingsong Community Choirs
- I=Change (and all retailers)
- In Bed
- IOOF Centre for Educational & Medical Research
- Jantje Korringa
- Marcel Juffermans
- Jonathan McCauley
- Joyce Campbell
- Katharine Leavey
- KPMG
- Lendlease FutureSteps
- Linda Bostock
- Link Wentworth
- LUCRF Super
- Maple-Brown Abbott Limited
- Mimi Cullen
- National Projects & Maintenance
- Pater Pty Ltd
- Philip Goldwyn
- Pillow Talk
- Revesby Workers' Club
- S C Johnson
- Social Impact Leadership Australia
- StreetSmart Australia
- Suzanne Grae
- Temple & Webster
- Tom Kiat

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS

- Australian Government
- Bayside Council
- Camden Council
- NSW Department of Communities & Justice
- NSW Government
- Parramatta City Council
- Service NSW

## WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK

- Australian Philanthropic Foundation
- Mutual Trust
- Perpetual Limited

## WCS WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE FOR THE SIGNIFICANT GENEROSITY OF:

- AMP Foundation
- Baxter Charitable Foundation
- Build Your Descendants Pty Ltd AFT Global Discretionary Descendants Trust
- Charles Warman Foundation
- Edwards Estate
- Fidelity International Foundation
- Gray Family Foundation
- IMC Pacific Foundation
- James N Kirby Foundation
- Lenity Australia
- Macdoch Foundation
- Macquarie Group Foundation
- McKinsey & Co
- Metasoft Technologies
- Mostyn Foundation
- Paul Ramsay Foundation
- Ronald Geoffrey Arnott Foundation
- TGH Operations Management
- The Sir James McNeill Trust
- The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
- Thyne Reid Foundation
- Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation

## AMBASSADOR

- Sarah Le Marquand

## ADVOCATES

- Amani Haydar
- Ariana Levy
- Cheryl Rae
- Eileen Hoggett
- James Stewart
- Jo Gaines
- Lee Townsend
- Mark Coulter
- Natalie Ferres
- Sallianne McClelland
- Sandra Hodge



## PRO BONO/IN-KIND

- 1825 Interiors
- AW Edwards
- Bed Threads
- Body + Soul
- Bridge Housing
- By Johnny
- Eden Health Retreat
- Evolve Housing
- Frasers Suites
- Furniture by Design
- GWS Giants
- In Bed
- John Kell – Hicksons Lawyers
- Killara Services
- King Living Foundation
- Link Housing
- Maurice Blackburn
- Michael Hughes Foundation
- National Projects & Maintenance
- Parramatta Centenary  
Uniting Church
- PAYCE
- Pillow Talk
- QIC
- Rockdale Rotary Club
- Stellar Magazine
- Sydney Harbour Federation Trust
- Temple & Webster
- The College (WSU)
- The Generous and The Grateful
- Twilight Aged Care
- Two Good
- Western Sydney University
- Women's Legal Service

## WORKPLACE GIVING

- Atlassian
- Baker McKenzie
- Banking Corporate
- Blackmores
- Google
- Greenhill
- Guardian Australia
- Hometrack Australia
- Macquarie Group
- National Australia Bank Ltd
- PwC Australia
- Salesforce
- Sumitomo Mitsubishi
- Suncorp Group
- Westpac



Above from top, left to right: WCS fundraisers taking part in Adventure Allstars TV; Donations for Beecroft House; Beautiful bedding donations; Crucial gift card donations.

**We also thank those who have chosen to remain anonymous, we gratefully acknowledge your support.**

## ONLINE SUPPORT

The WCS digital platforms continue to be a source of strong community engagement, with our social media presence soaring across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and, newly in 2021, LinkedIn.

From engaging with corporate partners, to local businesses, to our committed and loyal supporter base – the WCS website and social media channels continue to be a source of information and support and an opportunity to share the latest updates on all things WCS.

## WCS ONLINE SUPPORT:



**2,199**

Instagram  
followers



**8,432**

Facebook  
followers



**3,098**

Twitter  
followers



**1,052**

LinkedIn  
followers



**12,000+**

Newsletter subscribers



**213,722k**

Website visits

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## REVIEW OF 2020/21 FINANCIAL YEAR

AS THE COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect everyday society through the 2021 financial year, it was WCS' experience that individuals, philanthropists, companies and the NSW Government stepped up their support of women facing domestic and family violence.

WCS received additional funds from both new and existing supporters. Donations peaked in July and August of 2020, with the community rallying to support WCS to safely service women and their children in need.

### During the year:

- We had seven shelters in operation. Shelters are funded by a mix of NSW Government grants, as well as donations from individuals, corporate partners and philanthropic trusts.
- We had two transitional homes providing medium-term housing for 34 clients, mostly women over the age of 50. Social housing rents are received via our community housing partner. These are Meanwhile Use properties that have been leased to WCS at no cost for a limited period by companies acting benevolently until the properties are commercially redeveloped.
- There was an expansion of Outreach Programs, funded by philanthropy. Outreach has been a focus during the pandemic.
- The NSW Government provided supplementary support of shelter operating costs including deep cleaning.
- The WCS Hub was funded exclusively by donations.

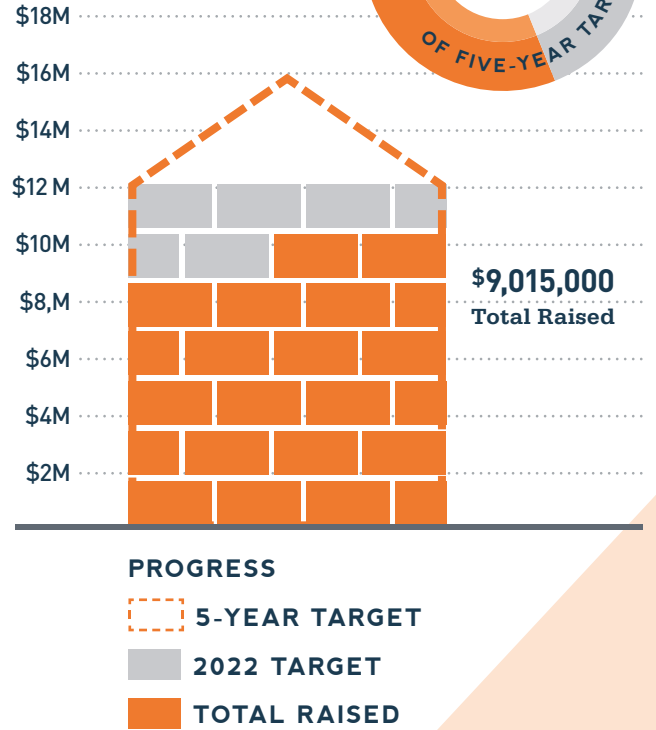
The surplus for the year was \$1.9 million, which came from donations. This surplus will serve future WCS Hub and shelter commitments, including the addition of new shelters in Camden and Revesby in the year ahead.

The audited balance sheet at 30 June 2021 shows a net asset position of \$7.8 million. All funds are fully committed towards future shelter and WCS Hub costs. In fact, as described in the fundraising targets of this report, there are significant funds still to be raised to meet five-year commitments including the planned expansion of the Shelter Network.

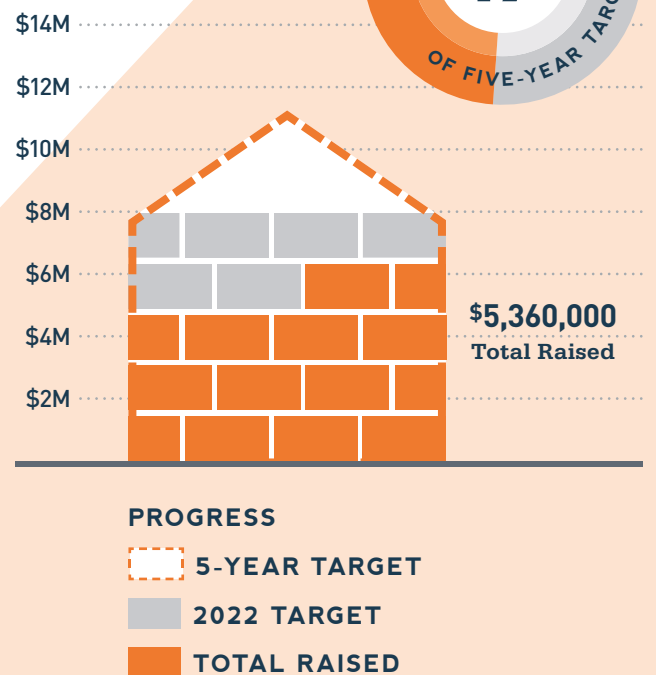
There remains a necessary focus for fundraising in the long-term, to support the ongoing work (and associated financial commitments) of WCS and its shelters, as the network grows to meet community need.

WCS' directors have declared the organisation can meet all commitments as they fall due in the audited financial report, which is available in full at the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website ([acnc.gov.au](http://acnc.gov.au)) via the 'Find a Charity' function.

### WCS HUB FUNDRAISING



### SHELTERS FUNDRAISING





## ACCOUNTABILITY

### WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS LIMITED

Public Benevolent Institution with  
DGR1 (Deductible Gift Recipient) Status  
ACNC registered



### ACCOUNTANTS

Purpose Accounting  
583 Elizabeth Street,  
Redfern NSW 2016

### AUDITORS

SDJA Audit Specialists  
PO Box 324,  
West Pennant Hills NSW 2125

### SOLICITORS

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One International Towers,  
Level 24, 100 Barangaroo Avenue,  
Barangaroo NSW 2000

## CONTACTS

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**Linked In:** [women-s-community-shelter](https://www.linkedin.com/company/women-s-community-shelter)









**ABN 54 153 006 556**

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TO DONATE PLEASE VISIT WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS  
OR SCAN THE QR CODE AT RIGHT:

<https://drct-womenscommunityshelters.prod.supporterhub.net/donations/walk-with-us>



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